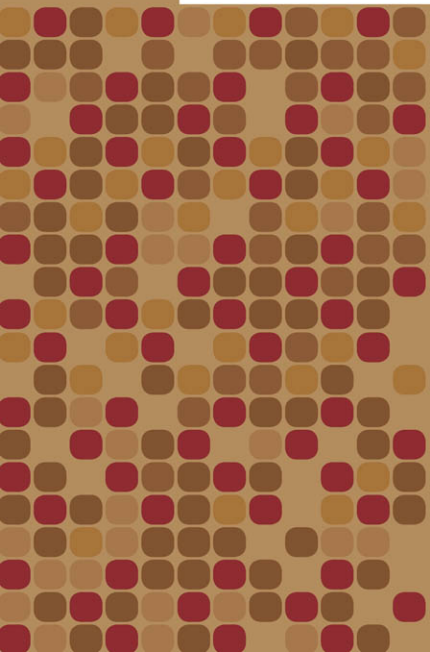
The Star Creek Papers

Washington Parish and the Lynching of Jerome Wilson

Horace Mann Bond and Julia W. Bond
Edited by Adam Fairclough



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The Star Creek Papers

The Star

HORACE MANN BOND

& JULIA W. BOND

Creek Papers

EDITED BY ADAM FAIRCLOUGH

FOREWORD BY JULIAN BOND

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Athens & London

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FOREWORD

Hanging on a wall of my study are a framed photograph and handmade certificate, both fifty-five years old. In the picture, three men in academic regalia stand behind two young children; the accompanying fading testimonial, neatly typed, announces to "ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS" the consecration of the children to "the high and noble estate of the scholar."

The children are my sister, Jane Marguerite, then three, and myself, aged two. The three men are W. E. B. Du Bois, E. Franklin Frazier, and my father, Horace Mann Bond.

It is arguable whether the long-ago blessing had any real effect on my current status as university professor, or my sister's chosen profession as a lawyer, but the three dedicators represented the pinnacle of scholarship about black Americans then.

Du Bois was the patriarch, in 1942 the dean of black—even white—translators and chroniclers of black struggle against white supremacy. And, as Adam Fairclough notes in his introduction, sociologist Frazier and Horace Mann Bond agreed on much. Frazier's views of the damage slavery did to the black family, now hotly disputed, find support in the *Star Creek Papers*. Like Frazier, for example, Bond contended that black household stability was subverted by white men's easy appropriation of black women, a taboo subject in the 1930s.

The document on my wall, now yellowed with age, serves as testimony to my father's dedication to unfettered and fearless inquiry. "That the estate of the scholar is an ancient and honorable one," he wrote more than half a century ago, "known of olden times, and in

each generation, even in the times of distress and human misery and wretchedness, a refuge and a haven for the souls of men."

Horace Mann Bond valued a life of scholarship for his children as much as for himself. He knew, from both his heritage and his examination of history, that the story of black southerners was also the story of southern whites; the relationships, amicable and hostile, between these people was and is the story of the United States.

He wrote in the middle 1930s, and his work was informed by his own life and training as a scholar. Viewed from today's vantage, it may suffer, but the themes from Star Creek resonate today—in calls for land and restitution for the victims of racism past, present, and enduring, concern about and critiques of the stability of the black family, and lynching—by rural Louisiana mobs then and by more respectable rabble today.

The publication now, after more than sixty years, of my parents' manuscripts, written before my sister and I were born, is more than welcome. I am proud that my mother is given due credit for her part in the project. Given her modest nature, what pleases her is that, twenty-five years after his death, this work will confirm her partner's place in the pantheon of intellectuals of the 1930s and 1940s who helped pioneer the modern interpretation of the southern black family after slavery and Reconstruction. For these innovators, families like the Wilsons were resilient, hard working, and ethical. My father and others argued against the racist obfuscation that typified popular and academic descriptions of these people, and he criticized the federal government which had promised to help them out of servitude and peonage.

My father's experiences traveling in the South for the Rosenwald Fund gave him a wealth of dinner-table stories of the people he and my mother had met and the experiences they had shared.

One favorite story placed him in rural Alabama, stuck in a muddy rut on a country road. From nowhere, it seemed, two black men and a mule providentially appeared and pulled his stranded car from the hole they surely had created. They asked how such a well-dressed man driving such a nice car found himself in this forgotten corner. He replied that he worked for the Rosenwald Fund as he nervously waited

to see how much his rescue would cost. "You work for Cap'n Julius!" the men exclaimed. There would be no charge for helping someone doing Julius Rosenwald's work.

One of the Wilson kin lived in Atlanta when my father became dean of education at Atlanta University in 1957 and our family moved from Pennsylvania to Georgia. My parents had befriended the family years before my mother discovered the connection; the relationship helped Fairclough trace Wilson survivors now scattered across the country.

Adam Fairclough deserves a huge amount of gratitude, not only from Horace Mann Bond's survivors, but from present-day scholars and other readers who will find in these pages the work of a scholar willing to challenge established wisdom.

Fairclough's previous work on the modern civil rights movement's most prominent leader, *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, and King's organization, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.*, and his excellent civil rights history of twentieth century Louisiana, *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915–1972*, demonstrate a commitment to scholarship representative of his modern generation of civil rights historians, who look at the black movement differently than their predecessors, from inside out and bottom up, rather than from top down and outside in. That perspective and his familiarity with and knowledge of the currents of black and white intellectual opinion on race of more than a half-century ago suit his interpretation of Horace Mann Bond's work particularly well. That he is British makes his accomplishments all the more remarkable, or perhaps more understandable. He has both a firm grasp of historical scholarship and an outsider's critical eye and acute ear for nuance that might escape a native.

Just as two rustics rescued my father in Alabama decades ago, Adam Fairclough has revived his long-forgotten examination of a tiny community whose people, through the years, still have large lessons to teach us.

For that deliverance, thankfulness extends beyond Horace Mann Bond's family, to all those interested in America's past, present, and future.

Writing of scholars fifty-five years ago, my father might have been thinking of the work he and my mother did in rural Louisiana, now revived, when he recorded for his children's posterity: "that for the good of humankind such an estate should not be allowed to perish from the earth, but that each generation of Man shall find among their number some who shall cleave to that honorable estate."

Julian Bond

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Editing the *Star Creek Papers* has been a fascinating and moving experience. Coming across these long-forgotten manuscripts seemed at first sheer serendipity, but, in retrospect, it was more than pure chance. I had long been interested in the Wilson family of Washington Parish. In 1987, wading through the NAACP's lynching files in connection with my research on Louisiana, I read about the shooting affray on the Wilson farm that took place on July 21, 1934, and the subsequent trial, conviction, appeal, and lynching of Jerome Wilson. I sketched the bare outlines of the story in *Race and Democracy*, but I always wanted to know more about these events. Every lynching was a tragedy, but the fate of the Wilson family seemed especially tragic. John Wilson was a strikingly sympathetic character, and I often wondered what became of him and his family. Were any of his children still alive? Where did they go after Jerome's death? Did any Wilsons still own land and farm in Washington Parish?

In 1994 I was introduced to Julia W. Bond by our mutual friend Connie Curry. Prompted by Julian Bond, who knew that a lynching had occurred in a place called "Star Creek," Louisiana, while his parents had been living there, I asked Mrs. Bond about her recollections of this event. Only then did I learn of the Bonds' personal knowledge of Jerome Wilson's lynching, and of Horace Mann Bond's effort, sixty years earlier, to turn the history of the Wilson family into a book. Mrs. Bond also told me of her friendship with Freddye Henderson of Atlanta, who was a first cousin of Jerome Wilson. When finally I had the opportunity to go through Horace Mann Bond's papers, I read his

Star Creek manuscripts with mounting excitement and enthusiasm. A recent biographer of Bond had, to my amazement, devoted only a page or two to Bond's Star Creek sojourn, and only a couple of paragraphs to the researches and writings that it inspired. I had no doubt in my mind that publication of the Star Creek manuscripts would make an important contribution to both the sociology and history of the American South. Karen Orchard, director of the University of Georgia Press, shared that view and I am grateful for her confidence and support.

In pursuing this project I am indebted to Julian Bond for providing initial encouragement and to Julia Bond for her help and cooperation throughout. In a real sense, Mrs. Bond is the co-author of this book. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the help of Freddye Henderson, who gave generously of her time and provided invaluable information, based on personal knowledge and memories, about the Wilson and Magee families. Two surviving siblings of Jerome Wilson also helped me to trace the history of the Wilsons since 1935. Felton Wilson of Chicago provided important details of the family, as did Alexzine Wilson Young of Brooklyn. Mrs. Young was particularly obliging, and she freely shared her vivid and painful memories of the events of 1934–35. I am immensely grateful to her.

The task of editing the *Star Creek Papers* was made considerably easier by the fact that I spent 1994–95 at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina. This wonderful institution not only provided that most precious of all commodities, time, but also gave me invaluable secretarial assistance. Two NHC staff members, Karen Carroll and Linda Morgan, contributed many hours of their time to retyping and putting onto disk blurred and dog-eared copies of the original manuscripts. Their cheerful and efficient assistance was a real boon. I also wish to acknowledge the scholarship of E. Russ Williams Jr. of Monroe, Louisiana, whose encyclopaedic *History of Washington Parish* helped me to confirm and amplify important details of people mentioned in Bond's narrative. Finally, my wife, Mary Ellen Curtin, was unstinting in her encouragement and help.

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CLAIBORNE
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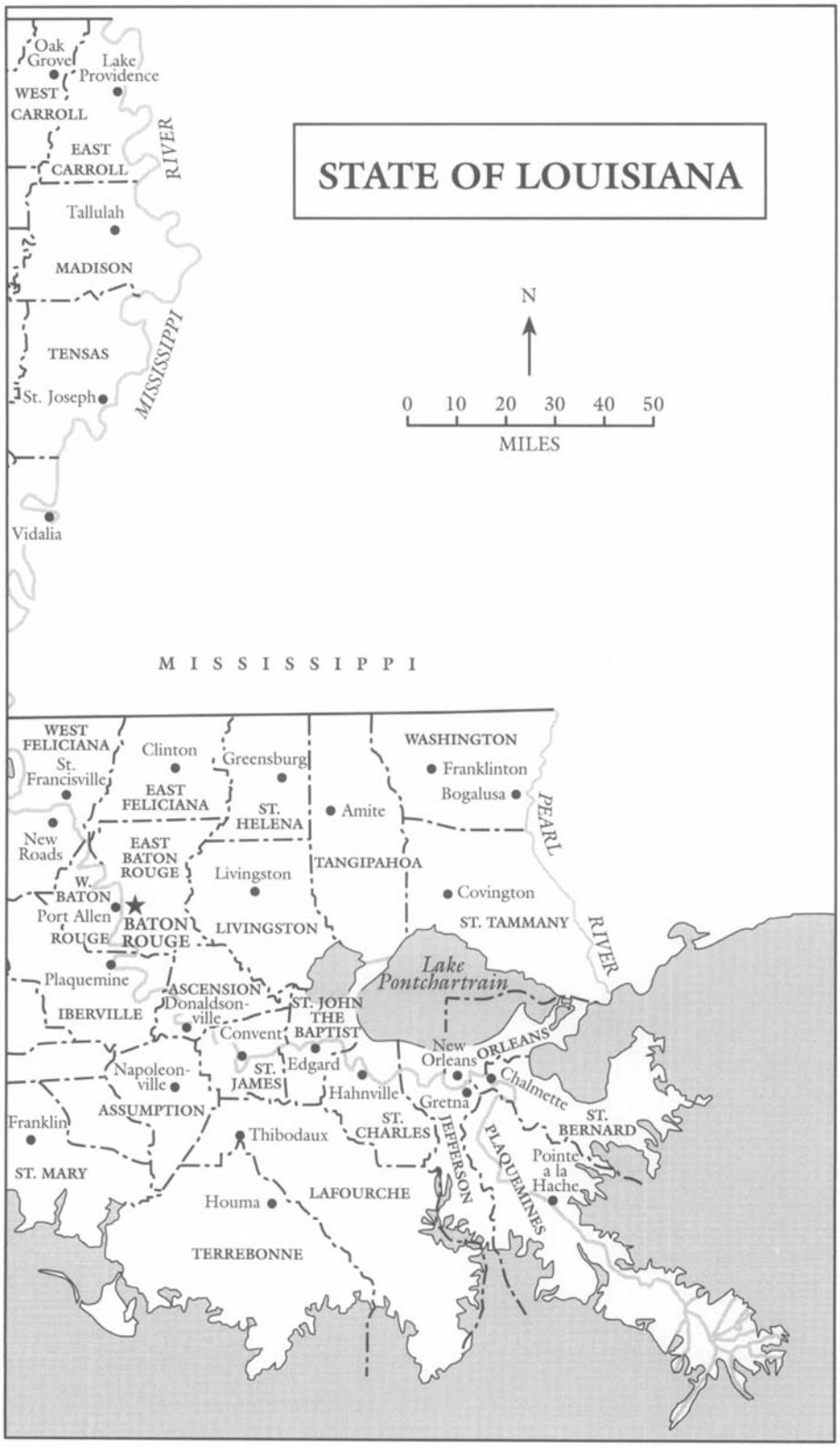
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TERREBONNE

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INTRODUCTION

In 1934 Horace Mann Bond was in the early years of a distinguished career as a historian, educationist, and university president. Already, at age twenty-nine, a professor at Fisk University with an armful of publications, his expertise as an authority on black education took him to Washington Parish, a corner of southeastern Louisiana bordered by Mississippi on two sides. Under the auspices of the Rosenwald Fund, he and his wife, Julia Washington Bond, lived in a small farming community and studied the operation of the local black schools. Today they would be called "participant-observers"; in 1934 they were dubbed "explorers." This experience, Horace recorded, "proved one of the most valuable of our entire lives." [1]

For three months the Bonds, who had married in 1929 and had no children yet, lived in a wooden cabin in a district known as Star Creek. They rose before dawn to draw water, chop wood, and start a fire. They had no electricity or running water, and cooked in a kitchen where rain entered through a leaky roof. A lime-slaked hole in the ground served as a toilet. Such conditions were no worse than how most blacks—and many whites—still lived in the 1930s. Besides, the Bonds enjoyed the luxury of a secondhand, if rather unreliable, Ford automobile. Julia passed most days in the company of Gabe Magee ("Miss Gabe"), who lived with her husband, Ernest Magee, on the farm where the Bonds' cabin stood. When Horace was not fixing up the cabin and talking with neighbors, he visited nearby farms, made occasional trips to the towns of Franklinton and Bogalusa, and observed

the running of the local black schools. As "Portrait of Washington Parish" attests, Washington Parish was not that far from New Orleans in miles but very distant in terms of culture. Bond became fascinated by its peculiarities.[2]

Quickly befriended and accepted, the Bonds became fond of their rustic neighbors. "My wife and I found ourselves liking the people there more than any we had ever known before," wrote Horace. "Honest, self-respecting, [and] hard-working," they were "my idea of what human beings ought to be." He recorded their observations and experiences in a diary. A rich, funny, and evocative description of black life in the rural South, Bond's "Star Creek Diary" is published here for the first time.[3]

"Portrait of Washington Parish" and "Star Creek Diary" are not works of academic scholarship in the vein of such sociological classics of the era as Charles S. Johnson's *Shadow of the Plantation* (1934), John Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (1937), Hortense Powdermaker's *After Freedom* (1940), or Allison Davis's *Deep South* (1941). They are, however, superb social observations written by a black intellectual at the height of his powers. Horace Mann Bond was also a fine writer. "Portrait of Washington Parish" and "Star Creek Diary" have immediacy and literary freshness.[4]

Bond's Star Creek writings reflected his democratic instincts, love of the South, and, above all, deep respect for ordinary black southerners. Bond once explained his admiration for Booker T. Washington by noting Washington's immense popularity among the most illiterate blacks of the Deep South. "These people cannot be fooled, and they know the truth when they hear it—if I had not learned some time ago that instincts were no longer in good form, I should say that they have an instinct for that which is true and genuine." Aided by Julia's observations, Bond captured these qualities in his Star Creek neighbors. Listening to their conversations with a sensitive ear, he faithfully reproduced the rhythms and inflections of their rural dialect. With no hint of condescension, he produced a very human portrait of a rural black community, an account tinged with affection, understanding, and respect.[5]

Bond also illuminated the development of black schools in the 1930s. Indeed, the study of the Rosenwald school and the study of the black community were in large part one and the same. To an extent rarely documented by historians, the "Rosenwald schools" were embedded in the fabric of rural black communities, a fact that their very name—by implying that they were outright gifts of northern white philanthropy—tended to mask. In fact, Rosenwald money furnished only a part—less than a half—of the necessary funding to build Rosenwald schools. The greater portion came from the state government and significant amounts came from blacks themselves.[6]

The contribution made by blacks in the form of money, materials, and labor made these schools more than mere buildings. Drives to build Rosenwald schools, encouraged by state agents employed by the Fund, gave blacks a sense of common purpose and community progress at a time when they were excluded from politics and subjected to gross discrimination in every area of life. Writing of Star Creek, the Bonds reported:

> Immediately after the War, when the price of cotton gave economic security to the community that it has never since enjoyed, the members of the community obtained a Rosenwald grant-in-aid. They then rented a saw mill, bought some timber . . . and cut the trees, sawed the timber, and hauled it to the site of the school where they erected the structure. This community experience is recalled with great pride. . . . They speak of the school as "our school" in a sense that transcends the ordinary use of that term. Teachers have come and gone, but the memory of that united community and of their contribution centers the life of all in the institution.

So important was the school that it, rather than the church, provided the main focus of community activity.[7]

"Star Creek Diary" provides a richly detailed portrait of a way of life that was on the threshold of virtual extinction, although few perceived it at the time. Between 1920 and 1930 the number of black farmers had already declined by 17 percent, the acreage they cultivated by 30 percent. During the next fifteen years New Deal legislation favored large producers at the expense of small farmers, mechanical

cotton-pickers dispensed with the need for black labor, and wartime industrial expansion acted as a magnet to rural southerners. As the old cotton economy declined, migration from the countryside to the towns soon reached the proportions of a mass exodus, and it accelerated when peace returned in 1945. By 1960 about half the African American population lived outside the South, and blacks, both North and South, had become an overwhelmingly urban people. "By the 1970s," writes Gilbert C. Fite, "it could be said that blacks had been all but eliminated from farming."[8]

In scattered pockets of the rural South, however, including Washington Parish, black farmers still cling to the soil with stubborn tenacity. "Star Creek Diary" helps us to to understand why.

The third previously unpublished manuscript contained in this volume illustrates both the tenacity of black agriculturalists and the dynamics of migration. "Forty Acres and a Mule" is the history of a family of black farmers that begins in slavery and ends in 1935, spanning three generations of Wilsons and Magees. As a document of social history it is, to my knowledge, one of a kind, for it culminates in a lynching.

Horace Mann Bond had a lifelong interest in black family history, and one question, in particular, always intrigued him: What accounted for the strength, stability, and success of some families? Bond was struck by the fact that so many black farmers in Washington Parish owned their own land, and he wondered why. Searching for the answer in the histories of these families, he gathered information from his neighbors and started constructing detailed genealogies.

Bond focused his research on the family of John Wilson, one of whose sons, Jerome Wilson, languished in Franklinton jail under sentence of death. Jerome's conviction had arisen from a bizarre shooting incident that took place on the Wilson family farm shortly before the Bonds arrived in Star Creek. A seemingly trivial dispute over a mule had led to a fatal exchange of gunfire that left a deputy sheriff dead, one of John Wilson's sons mortally wounded, and another son, Jerome, accused of murder. After a trial of indecent haste, conducted while a

lynch-mob bayed for blood outside the court house, a jury of white men convicted Jerome Wilson of murdering deputy sheriff Delos C. Wood. Jerome's brother, Luther, his mother, Tempie, and his uncle, Sammy, were also due to stand trial.[9]

Horace Mann Bond had no intention of involving himself in this affair when he and Julia moved to Washington Parish in October 1934. Quite the contrary: in the tense aftermath of the shooting and trial, he knew that he needed to be prudent. If he showed too keen an interest in the Wilson affair, if he asked too many pointed questions about "race relations," he might easily become an object of suspicion, possibly jeopardizing his own, and his wife's, safety.[10] Still, Bond could hardly avoid hearing about the subject. His neighbor, Gabe Magee, was a cousin of Jerome Wilson. Indeed, it was difficult to find a neighbor who was *not* related by blood or marriage to the Wilson family.

In fact, Bond found the story of the shooting incident and the subsequent trial engrossing. He became fascinated by the history of the Wilsons, by their success in acquiring land, and by the apparently inexplicable shooting affray on the Wilson farm. He discovered that John Wilson belonged to an extended family that consisted of more than a thousand people, most of them farmers, many of them landowners, and most of them direct descendants of a handful of slaves. By the end of 1934 Bond had drawn up a family tree of the Wilsons that started with Jerome Wilson's slave grandparents, Isom Wilson and Mandy Daniels.

The story of the Wilson family took on an unexpected twist, however, when a group of white men dragged Jerome Wilson from his jail cell and killed him. The lynching took place on January 11, 1935, only days after Wilson had been granted a new trial—and the very day the new trial was to open.

This shocking event ended Bond's rural idyll. He and Julia left Washington Parish for the safety of New Orleans. But Bond could forget neither the lynching nor the fate of the Wilson family. John Wilson, a man of bedrock honesty and sturdy independence, now stood to lose everything. His wife suffered a nervous breakdown. Two of his

sons were dead and another remained in jail. Bond wanted to help Wilson keep his family together and remain on the land.

In March 1935 John Wilson visited with Bond in New Orleans. "He is an exceptionally intelligent man," wrote Bond, "and talks with great power. If I could only transcribe exactly what he says, it would be a rare piece of literature." The record of their conversations provided Bond with the raw material for a manuscript, which he titled "Forty Acres and a Mule." He planned to write a history of the Wilson family, beginning with their origins in slavery and ending with the lynching of Jerome Wilson. He intended donating the bulk of any royalties to John Wilson. The Wilsons fled Washington Parish, however, most of the family moving to Chicago, and Bond abandoned the project.[11]

Bond's unfinished manuscript has been gathering dust for sixty years. "Forty Acres and a Mule" provides fascinating insights into lynching, race relations, and the history of a black farming community. It also tells us about Horace Mann Bond as a black intellectual and the ideas that influenced him.

Bond disguised his authorial voice in "Forty Acres and a Mule" by creating an omniscient narrator who evoked the vernacular dialect of Washington Parish blacks—in effect, merging his own voice with John Wilson's. However, Bond used the narrative to convey his own ideas and believed he was making an important contribution to the study of the black family. As he jokingly reported to his mentor Robert Park, the well-known University of Chicago sociologist, "I think the individual life histories of each member of these families is enough to make even Frazier turn green with envy."[12]

The reference, of course, was to another of Park's black students, E. Franklin Frazier. On his way to becoming one of the foremost sociologists of his time, Frazier had recently published *The Negro Family in Chicago* and was working on his larger synthesis, *The Negro Family in the United States*. These books remained, for thirty years, the most highly regarded studies of the black family in historical perspective. Their influence was universal. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Frazier's tragic account of a people whose African culture had been

obliterated, and whose family life had been handicapped by slavery, loosened by Emancipation, and disorganized by migration strongly colored "Forty Acres and a Mule." Over thirty years later, Bond remained convinced that Frazier's studies of the black family had "not been surpassed for their penetration and insightful analysis."[13]

Bond's reliance on Frazier, however, poses a crucial problem when it comes to assessing "Forty Acres and a Mule." To state the matter baldly, for the past thirty years scholars have been systematically assaulting Frazier's ideas on the black family. The undermining of Frazier started with the hostile reaction to the Moynihan Report of 1965. It gathered force with the publication of sociological studies of contemporary family structures that stressed community and adaptation rather than pathology and disorganization. Historians, using cliometric techniques, attacked Frazier from another angle, disputing his generalizations about black family life under slavery. The result is a widespread rejection of what is sometimes crudely labelled the "damage" model of the black family. The idea that black family life in the twentieth-century city has been crippled by the legacy of slavery has few advocates. So low has Frazier's reputation sunk that he merits barely a dismissive mention in many studies. For example, Herbert Gutman, in his influential *Black Family in Slavery and Freedom*, flatly stated that Frazier's interpretation of the slave family was wrong on virtually all counts.[14]

This is a remarkable shift in opinion, for to a large extent Frazier had merely systematized beliefs shared by virtually all African Americans at the time. Indeed, the proposition that slavery had cruelly stunted black family life was one of the few things upon which Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois agreed.

If Frazier's critics are right, however, Bond would have been following an error-strewn path by following Frazier. Like Frazier, Bond probably overstated the looseness, instability, and matriarchal nature of family life under slavery. And like Frazier, Bond overestimated the extent of family disorganization after Emancipation, and underestimated the number of strong, two-parent families. Rather than constituting a

rare example of morality and stability against a background of sexual laxness and disorganization, the Wilsons, if not exactly typical, were a far more common family type than Bond believed.

The supposed disorganizing impact of migration, central to Frazier's sociology, added to Bond's reluctance to see the Wilsons move North. Thus Bond used the history of Jerome Wilson's maternal family, the Magees, as a counterpoint to that of his paternal family, the Wilsons. The story of Tempie's siblings, Bond believed, illustrated the disasters that so often befell black families when uprooted from the land and cast adrift in the city. The Magees had started to migrate North, and they were losing their family cohesion. John's siblings, on the other hand, had enlarged upon the land bequeathed them by their father, remaining intact as a family, their southern roots giving them strength and stability. "I am afraid that if [John Wilson] takes his family to Chicago," Bond wrote, "they will become completely disorganized. His wife's family has moved to Chicago, and they are already completely demoralized there."[15] The realities of migration, however, were much more complex. The Magees who migrated to Chicago, Atlanta, and California surmounted adversity and retained their family identity. Some achieved great success.

Yet "Forty Acres and a Mule" also highlights the continuing vitality of Frazier's ideas. Like Frazier, Bond argued that the privileged access of white men to black women had profoundly influenced and distorted black family life. Arriving in Washington Parish, he had been struck by the fact that the majority of families, both black and white, shared the same surnames. He speculated that kinship ties, not merely sentiment, explained why so many blacks adopted the names of their former masters after Emancipation. He then painstakingly documented, compiling detailed genealogies that stretched back to slavery, how black and white families intertwined.

Bond's description of how blood lines crisscrossed the color line is perhaps the least accessible part of "Forty Acres and a Mule." Today's reader might be confused, puzzled, or even offended by his excessively detailed account of racial intermingling. In the 1930s, however, miscegenation was still a subject of intense fascination for many whites and

blacks. White curiosity derived from both the scholarly interest of sociologists and anthropologists, but also from the prurience of a society that regarded interracial sex as exotic and taboo. Indeed, white attitudes to interracial sex embodied many of the feelings of repression and guilt that clouded the murky undertow of racist ideology. The prevention of interracial sex—expressed as a determination to punish and deter black rapists—was the white South's ostensible justification for lynching. Yet the hidden history of miscegenation—usually sexual relationships between white men and black women—was the white South's guilty secret. Miscegenation had also long been a popular theme in fiction, and in the 1930s the "tragic mulatto," although a tired cliché, was still being pressed into service.

For blacks, often themselves the progeny of interracial unions, the mulatto symbolized, in the most acute form, the irrationality and hypocrisy of the white-imposed color line. That line defined as "Negro" a person with *any* traceable black forbears. The mulatto—especially when he or she could "pass" for white—personified the truth that race was an idea defined by white-made law and ideology, not a natural and universal category.[16] The biological imprecision of the South's color line mocked the notion of white racial "purity" and made nonsense of the idea that whites were innately superior to blacks. Bond, in his own writings on the subject, did not spare white hypocrisy. "The dominant group, after destroying the purity of both parent-stocks, blandly hoists the bars against these left-handed children in the sacred name of racial purity."

Bond's own interest in miscegenation also stemmed from a desire to discredit "scientific" racism. In his first published article Bond entered the stormy debate over the IQ tests administered to Army recruits in 1917. Attacking the fallacy of using the test scores to allege black racial inferiority, he pointed out the wide overlap between the scores achieved by individual whites and blacks. Results corresponded to education and environment, not to race. Southern whites, of course, tried to explain away racial overlaps, and to denigrate black achievements, by attributing the undoubted excellence of some blacks to varying degrees of "white blood." But in 1931 Bond studied the IQ

scores of mixed-race children in two different mulatto communities near Mobile, Alabama. In the first mulatto group average scores exceeded national norms; in the second, however, average scores fell short of both national norms and the national average for Negro children. Both groups possessed similar racial characteristics, the children ranging in color from brown to white. "Manifestly, the tonic qualities of white blood . . . has no right to be claimed as the basic factor here." [17]

Although interracial unions were rare in the 1930s, Bond shared Frazier's conviction that blood ties to white families helped to explain the pattern of black landownership in the rural South. In slave society white fathers had often favored and sometimes freed their mulatto offspring. Hence mulattoes had formed a high proportion of the antebellum free Negro population, and after Emancipation they tended to achieve a higher economic status than most blacks. The extent to which white fathers helped mulatto children acquire land in the postbellum South is hard to establish. Still, a recent study of Hancock County, Georgia, has asserted that "in the Deep South, where black farmers were systematically impeded in their quest for land, interracial kinship played an important role in opening the first door." [18]

Frazier and Bond both believed that black landholding had promoted family stability. They were correct. Black farmers who owned their land tended to have larger families, and the family heads, invariably fathers, exerted more parental authority by virtue of their ability to employ their children and endow them with land. Indeed, in examining the landowning families of Washington Parish enumerated in the U.S. Census between 1870 and 1920, the similarity between the black families and the white families is remarkable. If the census had not classified people according to race, it would be all but impossible to tell black and white families apart.

Landownership also gave cohesion to black communities. Arthur Raper could have been describing John Wilson when he wrote, in 1936, that "a Negro with land usually considers himself a kind of father to the community. He functions as a mediator between the mass of whites and Negroes. He becomes the spokesman for the local school trustees when they go to the county superintendant for assistance; he

intercedes with the court officials for Negro defendants from his community; he explains to the whites any unusual behavior of the local Negroes, and vice versa. . . . [Moreover], the owners are in virtual control of all Negro institutions." Elizabeth Rauh Bethel's 1981 study of a South Carolina black community, which tracked black landowners over a period of one hundred years, came to the same conclusion. Extensive landownership had helped the community to survive boll weevil, crop failures, and declining cotton prices. Moreover, blacks who migrated to the cities tended to remain in touch with their communities of origin if their families continued to own land.[19]

Yet most black families in the postbellum South did *not* become landowners; although common and even predominant in some localities, landownership eluded the great majority. Bond therefore intended "Forty Acres and a Mule" to be much more than a dramatic account of a shootout and a lynching, more even than a treatise on the black family. Developing his own ideas as a historian, Bond turned the tragedy of the Wilson family into a metaphor for the larger historical tragedy of African Americans since slavery.

The title "Forty Acres and a Mule" referred to the aspirations of the emancipated slaves. It also referred to Thomas Dixon's white supremacist novel *The Clansman* (1905). In a chapter titled "Forty Acres and a Mule," Dixon had depicted the freedmen as lazy and gullible, their desire for free land risible. His scornful picture of idle emancipated slaves demanding something for nothing was then immortalized on screen in D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915).[20] In the 1930s many white historians, echoing Dixon, still treated the freedmen's expectation of free land as a naive and ludicrous delusion.

Bond challenged this view head-on, with Alabama historian Walter L. Fleming as his principal target. The freedmen "knew exactly what they needed," Bond insisted. "They asked for a subsistence farmstead—for forty acres and a mule." It was a reasonable expectation and a realistic goal. Although Bond's assertion went against the grain of the racist-tinged scholarship of the time, it has now become a commonplace among historians of Reconstruction. Indeed, the consensus of modern scholarship is to fault the Republican party for failing to

give the freedmen land, not to condemn the freedmen for wanting it. As Bond pointed out more than fifty years ago, Congress's refusal to redistribute land constituted one of the most egregious errors of Reconstruction.[21]

Yet Bond also wanted to document how, even when the federal government turned its back on land redistribution, blacks like Isom and John Wilson had acquired property and become "shifty" (resourceful) farmers. Indeed, by 1910 at least 218,000 blacks—about one black farmer in four—owned land. This was a phenomenal achievement. To Bond, the Wilsons represented all that was admirable among black southerners; they were the acme of self-help in the tradition of Booker T. Washington. "The entire family," wrote Bond, "is a good example of what a Negro owner family can become—unsophisticated, of course, but honest, industrious, ambitious people."[22]

The murder of Jerome Wilson, however, was a frightening reminder that lynching could still wreck even the most virtuous of families. Although the number of lynchings had fallen sharply during the 1920s, in the early 1930s it rose again. The numbers were relatively small, and nowhere near pre–World War I levels. But lynching occurred with sufficient frequency to sustain a climate of fear that touched the lives of all African Americans. Lynching reminded blacks that a judicial system composed of white judges, white prosecutors, and white jurors, and a law enforcement apparatus composed of white policemen, would neither prevent nor punish the "illegal" violence of whites against blacks.

Even as the incidence of lynching declined, moreover, it remained axiomatic that any black person who killed a law enforcement officer would pay with his life, regardless of any extenuating circumstances. "There is an unwritten law in Louisiana," wrote black attorney A. P. Tureaud, "that any man who kills a policeman . . . either goes to the electric chair or the police will kill him." It is unlikely that a second trial for Jerome Wilson would have produced either a different verdict or a different sentence: successful appeals in such cases usually only delayed executions. Nevertheless, the mere possibility that Jerome Wilson might escape with his life was intolerable to nameless whites in Washington Parish.[23]

Bond intended "Forty Acres and a Mule" to make a distinctive contribution to the campaign against lynching. The NAACP, which spearheaded that campaign, did not shrink from describing lynchings in lurid and bloody detail. But its horror stories rarely probed beneath the surface: seeking to maximize the short-term shock effect of lynchings, the NAACP's searchlight briefly illuminated each incident and then moved on to the next. There were scholars who collected statistics on lynching and formulated sociological explanations for the phenomenon. Both the shock approach of the NAACP and the statistical method of the social scientists, however, tended to bury the individual human stories, the one by sensationalizing, the other by generalizing. Even the best recent historical investigations of lynching offer only sketchy portraits of the victims and their communities.[24]

As a contribution to the study of lynching, therefore, "Forty Acres and a Mule" may be unique. Bond placed a single lynching in the context of one black family's history since slavery. He reminds us that behind each life claimed by lynching there was a person, a family, and a community—individual histories that are, in their own way, more informative than statistics, more eloquent than propaganda, and more illuminating than general histories.

Bond also reminds us of a crucial truth that recent studies of lynching—which stress that lynching rates varied from time to time and from place to place—have tended to obscure. The existence of variations *within* the South is less significant than the fact that lynchings occurred *throughout* the South. Washington Parish did not rank high in the county-by-county lynching statistics; it experienced only an "occasional" incident. Lynching did not have to occur with great frequency, however, to remind blacks of their vulnerability. "However considerable the regional variations in mob violence," writes W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "blacks realized that its potential threatened every black in the South."

It is impossible to estimate what proportion of the southern black population personally knew a victim of lynching, but it must have been substantial. In Washington Parish, with its large, complex kinship network of Wilsons, Bickhams, and Magees, Jerome Wilson had hundreds,

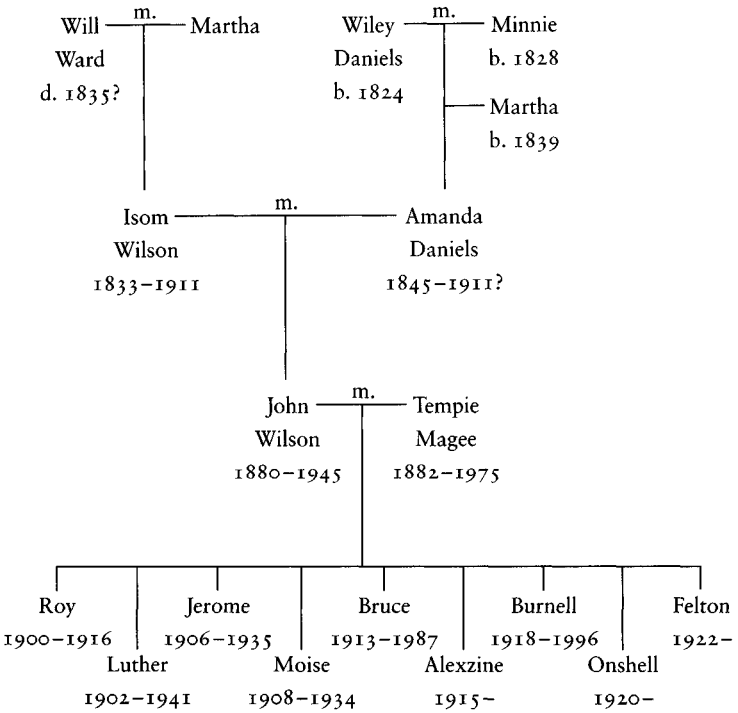
possibly a thousand, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, and nieces. The psychological impact of lynching was profound; the memory lingers.[25]

To Bond, what happened to the Wilsons had no rhyme or reason. Jerome Wilson should never have been lynched because the shooting affray on the Wilson farm should never have happened. The whole train of events seemed senseless, illustrating the sheer contingency of lynching.

Yet Bond perceived a tragic inevitability about the fate that befell the Wilsons. He stopped short of arguing that lynching was a deliberate effort to dispossess black landholders—even though the history of lynching provides numerous examples of blacks being victimized because of their economic success. He did show, however, that lynching could destroy the work of generations in a single day. The lynching of Jerome Wilson shattered the Wilson family, and none of Bond's efforts to put it back together again succeeded. As the story of the Wilson family shows, lynching was a factor of incalculable importance in the northward migration of African Americans.

"Portrait of Washington Parish" incorporates a report written for the Rosenwald Fund and various drafts of Bond's unpublished manuscript, "The First Lynching of 1935." They have been edited to form a coherent whole. "Star Creek Diary" is published here as it was written save for minor editing. "Forty Acres and a Mule" has been edited more substantially, especially in the two middle chapters. The genealogical charts are Bond's own, as amplified and amended by the editor. Horace Mann Bond was responsible for writing the texts in this collection. Julia Bond made a substantial contribution to her husband's research and is hence listed as a co-author of the volume. All endnotes are the editor's.

THE WILSON FAMILY



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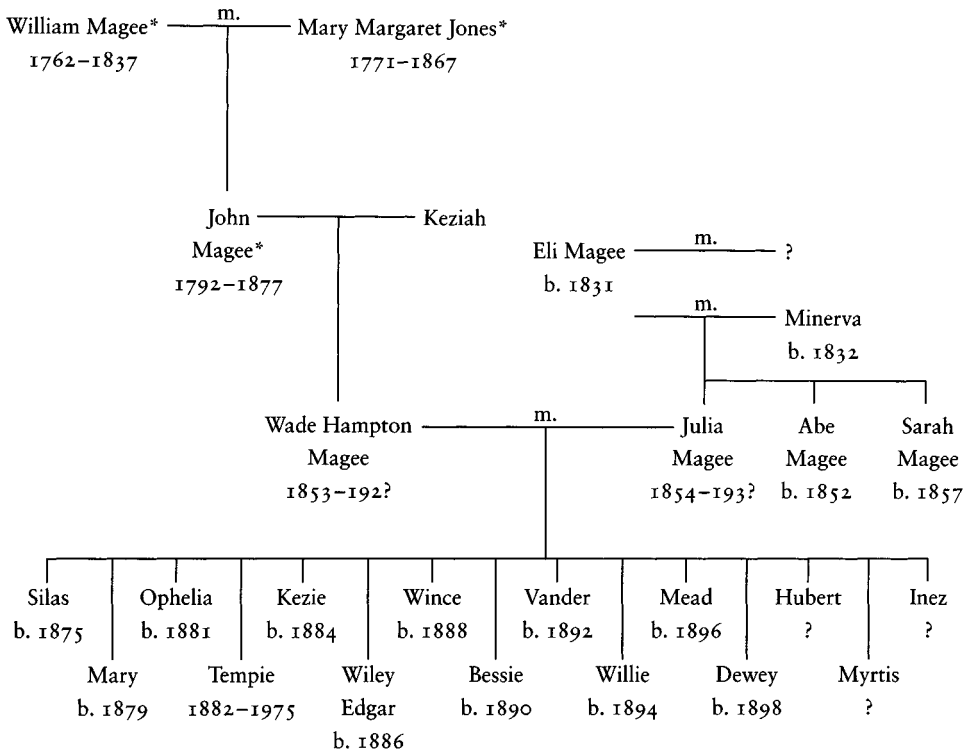

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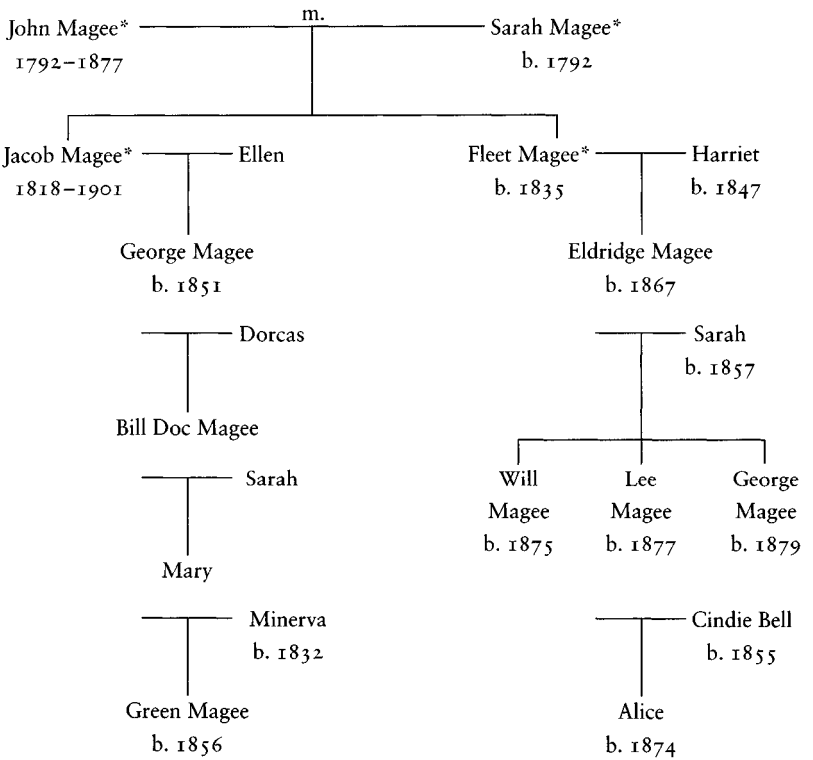
THE MULATTO CHILDREN

OF JACOB AND FLEET MAGEE



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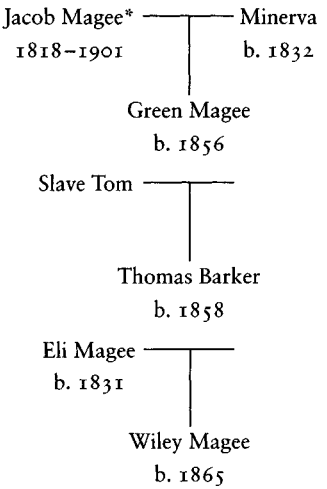
THE CHILDREN OF MINERVA



*White

Portrait of Washington Parish

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More than fourteen hundred Negroes have been lynched since 1904, the date of my birth. I remember the month of June, 1913, because of a recurrent nightmare that left me, night after night, screaming with a terrible fear. The nightmare faithfully reproduced, night after night, a cartoon which I had seen in a Negro magazine, *The Crisis*. In the drawing, and in the dream, several Negroes were depicted hanging from a tree, while "Lynch Law," caricatured as a gorilla-like creature with bloody fangs, a rope in one hand and a torch in the other, approached to light a funeral pyre beneath the taut black bodies. The dream had one elaboration of the cartoon: the monster always turned upon me, and I could never move a muscle to escape.

I am willing to leave to the psychiatrists an explanation of the subconscious setting of that nightmare. For me it was the beginning of what may mildly be described as "an interest" in the institution of lynching. That interest has led me to follow closely the immense literature on lynching in newspapers, periodicals, and books; to observe quite carefully the various efforts to enact an anti-lynching bill; and to consider the phenomenon in its relation to the social setting, as well as within the framework of my own emotional reaction to it.

It is difficult not to regard a lynching as an abstraction, a happening that does not really concern you, an incident involving men, both victims and mob members, whom you do not know, will never meet, and who exist apart from your own circle of experience in a little lynching world of their own. Despite my own background, it was so with me;

or, at least, it was so until the eleventh day of January, 1935. Early on that Friday morning, in the Washington Parish jail at Franklinton, Louisiana, occurred the death of Jerome Wilson, described by the Coroner's jury as "death at the hands of a person or persons unknown."

The death of Jerome Wilson was the first lynching of 1935. I had not known the victim, but I knew his father and his mother, his brothers, his sisters, his uncles, aunts and cousins. For a brief period I had lived in a cabin three miles away from Jerome Wilson's home. I do not now know who the men were who lynched Jerome Wilson, but I have moved in a community where, doubtless, I have seen one or two of them daily. Under these circumstances it is difficult to maintain either an intellectual or an emotional abstraction toward the incident; it is neither a cold entry in a lynching list, fit for future placement on a graph, nor a cause for a protest parade one thousand miles away.

Jerome Wilson was the son of John Wilson, who married Tempie Magee. His paternal grandfather was one Isom Wilson, who married Mandy Daniels, a mulatto woman, soon after the Civil War. Isom and Mandy had eleven children, ten of whom are living today. First Isom, and then each of his four boys in succession became independent land owners. His seven girls married men who bought or "homesteaded" land in the Northern section of Washington Parish. In the early Summer of 1934 the descendants of Isom and Mandy Wilson included ten living sons and daughters and seventy-seven living grandchildren, forty-three of whom had married and established families of their own.

Isom Wilson's four sons were named Samuel, John, William and Simon. A community of land-owning Wilsons grew up around the Bethel Church, and in 1924 the community had added to it a three-room Rosenwald School built principally by contributions from the Negro farm owners in the neighborhood. During Reconstruction days Isom Wilson was a leader in local Republican politics. The fact that his sons continued his political interest, until the disfranchisement of Negroes by the Louisiana Constitutional Convention of 1898, is remembered by local white persons as the only black mark on the record of the Wilson family. A few Negroes are still registered as Republican

voters, although they are not allowed to participate in the Democratic "White" primaries.

The Bethel community is dominated by the Wilson family. There are adjoining Negro communities where Negro owners also predominate, and the second generation of Wilsons is inextricably bound to families similar in origin and circumstances, so that probably one thousand of the five thousand rural Negroes in the Parish belong to one of only three families.[1] Of the living grand-children of Isom and Mandy Wilson, twenty-two lived in the Bethel community, twenty-three in Franklinton, and nine in the Star Creek community. Two lived in the Jemerson Creek community, and one in the Black Jack community. Three lived in the small, nearby Mississippi towns of Picayune, Osyka and Summit. One lived at Kentwood, Louisiana. It is significant of family stability that the industrial city of Bogalusa, which has recruited all of its four thousand Negroes from the surrounding countryside within the last thirty years, failed to attract a single Wilson. On the other hand there are three Wilsons living in Chicago, more than a thousand miles away.

The individual farms are not large, averaging not much more than fifty acres. Isom Wilson homesteaded a "forty" and bought other land. John Wilson added to his small inheritance by homestead and purchase, and in 1934 owned two places totalling almost two hundred acres. On his farm in the Bethel community, on a graveled highway leading from Franklinton to the hamlet of Clifton, he had built in 1926 a new house, the only "painted," "sealed" house owned by Negroes in the community. The land is cut-over timber land, and in this day would be classified as "sub-marginal." On it, however, John Wilson made a good living, what with the aid of a wife celebrated for thrift in the community, and the assistance of a large family of children. Jerome, Luther, and Moise[2] were young men. Felton, twelve, and Bruce, ten, could go to school at Bethel and still find time to help raise a crop. Alexzine, the oldest girl, at sixteen was attending the County Training School at Franklinton as befitted the daughter of a prosperous farmer. The school bus passed the cross-roads just a mile from the Wilson home. Burnell ("Bunch") and Onshell ("Red"), respectively

aged thirteen and eleven, were also enrolled in the Bethel Rosenwald school. "Bunch" played on the girls' basketball team.

Washington Parish had in 1934 a stock-dipping ordinance, and the enforcement of this act was always attended by great grumbling by white and black farmers on "Dipping Day."[3] It is no easy matter to interrupt a farming schedule to corral stock before daybreak and drive them several miles to a convenient vat. On July 21, 1934, Range Rider Joe Magee came to John Wilson's home on an inspection tour. A certain mule, he asserted, had not been dipped. The mule had been dipped; and Jerome Wilson, in the absence of his father, became involved in a quarrel with the Range Rider over the mule.

Rebuffed, and angered, Joe Magee went to a white neighbor's house where he telephoned for aid from the Sheriff's office at Franklinton. Chief Deputy Sheriff Delos Wood, Deputy McCauley McCain, and a white citizen named Brad Spears came to support Magee. The Negro family was gathered on the back porch—Samuel Wilson, an uncle, Tempie, the mother, and the young men with their brothers and sisters. According to the testimony offered in the brief trial, Deputy Wood advanced to the porch steps and told the young man Jerome, "Come with me, boy." There are various accounts of what happened thereafter. A dispatch written by a local white reporter for the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, after the lynching of Jerome Wilson six months later, said that "several of the members of the Wilson family *pounced* upon the deputy sheriff when he attempted to arrest one of their number." (Italics mine)

The trial evidence purported to show that the deputy had drawn his pistol and moved toward Jerome when the latter refused to come with him. Moise, a younger brother, stood in the deputies' path and grabbed for the gun. In the scuffle, the deputy fired two shots into the boy's stomach. The mother, Tempie, tried to shield her son, Jerome. Luther and Jerome were shot. The boy, Felton, was shot in the leg. Jerome is then alleged to have run into the house, and fired through the window at Deputy Wood, killing him instantly.

In the excitement, Luther got away from the scene and hid in the woods. Sisters Alexzine and "Bunch" ran off toward the woods. Commanded by one of the white men to come back, "Bunch" returned. Alexzine jumped over a barbed wire fence, but her naked foot was caught and severely lacerated. She limped across two miles of woods and cotton patches to the home of a white neighbor, who took her in and cared for her wounds, and whose memory is forever blessed in the memories of all of the Negroes in the community for this kindness.

The rest of the Wilsons were lodged in jail. Moise died on the night of the shooting in jail, without medical attention for him or for his wounded brothers. Luther was caught the next morning and the Negro family accused of harboring him was also jailed. An attempt was made to lynch the entire family on the night of the lynching, and the Negroes give the credit for restraining the mob to several white men living near the Bethel community.[4] The confidence of these Negroes in "their own white folks," and their utter conviction that the would-be lynchers were "white folks we don't know" is not without significance.

Nine days after the shooting a special session of court presided over by Judge C. Ellis Ott began the trial of Jerome Wilson for the murder of Deputy Sheriff Delos Wood. Indictments were also drawn against Tempie, the mother, Sammy, an uncle, and Luther, the older brother. Some weeks after Jerome's conviction Tempie and Sammy were released on bond.

The trial opened on the morning of July 30, and the case was in the hands of the jury by the afternoon of the next day. While Jerome Wilson was being carried in a chair from the courtroom to the jail, to await the verdict, a group of men in the courthouse yard attempted to take the prisoner away from the officers. The sheriff relieved tension by an address to the mob in which he asked its members to "give the jury a chance." The jury had its chance; a verdict of "guilty" was returned on the morning of August 1.

The defense filed notice of an appeal, and Wilson was remanded to the Franklinton jail to await the action of the Supreme Court of Louisiana. The Negroes in the community were certain that the appeal

would be granted, although they could not understand why the local authorities refused to transfer Jerome to a distant jail for safe-keeping.

I came into the Parish in October of 1934. With my wife I was to live in the Star Creek community, another community of Negro owners some two miles distant from the Bethel community. My business was to be that of community study and school improvement under the auspices of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The shooting and the trial was scarcely two months old, and our advent was accompanied by easily discernible, and as easily understood, suspicion on the part both of whites and blacks. It was quite generally believed that we were detectives, seeking to uncover some hidden details of the late incident. The Negroes suspected that we might be spies for the white people, and the white people believed that we were sent to investigate the shooting for some organization "from up North" interested in "nigger rights."

It was only by adroit and persistent refusal to meddle with this powder magazine that we were able—or at least, thought we were able—to disarm all of the suspicions of the Negroes, and many of those entertained by the white people. We settled ourselves in a little cabin and proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as possible. This involved the putting in of screens, a task with which our Negro neighbors cooperated but feebly as they advised us that screens were entirely unnecessary. For the first few nights we could see the stars through our roof; but a few days' work enabled us to "seal" the shingle, weatherboarding walls and ceilings, and at the same time to reach some kind of understanding with our neighbors who dropped in to help and to watch the progress of the work.

When I asked a Louisiana librarian for a history of Washington Parish, he shook his head with scarcely concealed pity for my ignorance. "Nothing has ever happened in Washington Parish. Natchitoches? St. Martinsville? The Teche Country? Opelousas? There's plenty of history I can give you about those places. But *nothing* has ever happened in Washington Parish!" Yet a prominent white man in Washington

Parish told me with awe of the olden times—"They was ignormous things done in them days!"

Both of my informants, it proved, were right. The "Florida Parishes" have no "history" in terms of picturesque records of romantic Spanish Caballeros, or Creole dandies, or the legendary "black Mammy" of the plantation tradition. The isolation of this backwoods area, however, led to deeds whose "ignormity" is sprinkled through the rotting files of newspapers and the yellowed documents of official investigating committees, and in the memories of the old men and women of the Parish. Family feuds were as bloody and persistent as those in any Kentucky mountain county. Bordered both to the North and East by Mississippi, desperadoes from that State found a convenient refuge in the forests of Washington Parish; and black and white lawbreakers within the "Florida Parishes" found it convenient to step across the State line into sanctuary. The Parish bordering on Washington to the West earned the name of "Bloody Tangipahoa."

Washington Parish (county units elsewhere are "parishes" in Louisiana) is, culturally and geographically, an extension of the Coastal Plain that skirts the sea-ward borders of the South from Virginia to Texas. Washington Parish in Louisiana is, in fact, one of the "Florida Parishes" of the State, a part of the old Spanish Province of West Florida. The Spanish colonial influence never reached the "piney woods" of Northwest Florida from the port of Pensacola. The Latin culture of Spanish and French colonials which gives richness to the Louisiana tradition never penetrated the pine forests of the "Florida Parishes," although New Orleans is a scant seventy miles south of Franklinton. While trade and culture followed "The Old Spanish Trail" from East to West, the "piney woods" section was peopled by Scotch-Irish pioneers from the American hinterland. The wealthy slave owners were few in number, and they settled in the fertile river lowlands.

In 1860 Washington Parish numbered in its population only one thousand slaves and two thousand white persons. The slave owners and their slaves formed a "black belt" down the center of the Parish,

from North to South, along the lowlands of the Bogue Chitto River. The great mass of the poor white population lived in the piney woods, a sub-region that stretched down from the contiguous uplands of Mississippi. Ten years before the Civil War one hundred and forty-eight white families owned all of the 1,037 Negro slaves. There were two hundred and fifty seven other white families without slaves, and largely without land.

During Reconstruction political riots, assassinations, and "white-capping" were in almost daily vogue. In 1868 Washington Parish reported 646 votes for the Democratic, Seymour presidential ticket, with none for Grant. A Republican Registrar reported that he was shot at three times in Franklinton, and that the Republican vote among whites and blacks was suppressed by open intimidation and frequent murder. A Democratic witness retorted that the Republican had left Franklinton "owing Charley Woods a big bill for Whiskey."

The Balltown riot of 1901 is not celebrated in any history, but it remains in the memory of the old Negroes as a frightful massacre ending with the burial of Negro dead under military guard—"We didn' have nuthin' to bury 'em in; some we wropped in coats, and some we wropped in quilts, and some we jus' had to bury in they clothes." The Balltown riot was an unhappy sequel to Negro participation in politics, and was precipitated by tales told to suspicious whites by a lying Negro. Believing that the Negroes were planning to massacre all of the whites—a belief bedded in the psychoses of ante-bellum slave insurrections—a group of white men surrounded a Negro church and shot down the terrified, unsuspecting worshippers as though they had been squirrels in a cage.[5] The participation of Negroes in politics occasioned bitter and bloody conflicts, but in the end only served to entrench the old families and the old politicians more firmly in control of the Parish. Since the Parish was not an area of large plantations, the minority Negro group occasioned no fundamental disturbance of the economic pattern in their transition to freedom.

There is little obvious structural change in the composition of society in Washington Parish of today as compared to what it was "befo

de War." The names of the "prominent white people" of today are the same as those which appear in the random printed accounts of affairs in the Parish in 1865, and in the same relative social strata. The sons of the large slave-owners have become bankers, lawyers, physicians, and store-keepers, in addition to maintaining large land holdings in the rural areas. The "poor whites" of yesterday are the small farmers and tenants of today. The "middle class" of this society has the same relative composition today, the same family membership and the same relationship of retainers to the "upper" class. Its members hold minor political offices, work at skilled trades, and occasionally develop a successful farm.

There were two decisive differences, however, between the status of Negroes in the Parish as compared to other comparable regions in the South. Washington Parish had an abundance of free land, open under the Government to homestead entry; and the emancipated Negroes could achieve the economic emancipation of acquiring "forty acres and a mule" which even so determined a "radical" as Thaddeus Stevens once said to be far more important to the Negro's final freedom than the privilege of voting. Of equal importance was the fact that racial miscegenation was an accepted pattern of life on this raw frontier. No southern community is without instances of open concubinage involving white men and Negro women; and in these instances the relationship has been acknowledged at least tacitly, conferring upon the mulatto sons and daughters such prerogatives as immunity from arrest where a "pure Negro" would be speedily haled before the Courts; and corresponding social and economic favors which gave the mulatto a "marginal status" not only in the minds of white and black, but in his own estimation of his personality and his role in society.

Cheap land and miscegenation in Washington Parish made possible the development of segregated Negro farm-owning communities under the patronage of white relatives, who, in the nature of things, were usually members of the old white families in the community. Mulatto sons were, typically, more restless, and either through temperament or early background unfitted to remain in the rural community. Most of

these men are scattered in nearby towns as small tradesmen and teachers. The mulatto daughters were usually married off to progressive black men; and to many of these black tenants their wives brought a dowry of "forty acres," or the patronage of white fathers which aided them in obtaining this escape from tenant life.

The close relations between white and black, which made of concubinage an accepted feature of life in the period following the Civil War, ran through other aspects of life. White owners and Negro tenants worked together in the fields. The children of these parents played together, and, like them, worked together during their early years. Today these children of the post-Reconstruction days are men and women on the verge of old age. They know each other personally, and they have an affection for each other which is difficult to project into an abstracted view of a community in which a lynching can take place. To me it came as a shock to hear a Negro call a white man familiarly by his first name, to observe white families visiting Negro families and "taking coffee" with them, to see a white man sit down to dinner at "hog killing time," while across the table sat a Negro man who was, genuinely, his friend; and who, quite as genuinely, was also eating with no consciousness of the violation of a taboo almost as fundamental as those involved in sex mores.

Franklinton is the seat of government of Washington Parish. Twenty-eight miles to the east is the town of Bogalusa, the capital of an industrial barony that includes most of the "Florida Parishes" and neighboring Mississippi counties to the North and East. The founder of Bogalusa was an Irish lumberman, William Henry Sullivan, who was the agent of "them Goodyear boys from Buffalo," incorporated as the Great Southern Lumber Company. Sullivan died in 1929. He is important to this story because, if he had been living six years later, the first lynching of 1935 would not have occurred, in all probability, within thirty miles of his capital. For Sullivan was an autocrat; ruthless, sometimes whimsical, but always supreme, and lynchings were no part of the program of the process of civilization which he inaugurated

in the Parish. Not that he was averse to violence, where the interests of his realm seemed to demand it. He crushed an incipient effort to unionize the Bogalusa mills by playing one race off against the other, and, when that appeared on the verge of failure, by brutal force that left four white union organizers dead on the streets of the town he had made.[6]

Sullivan had no hypocrisies regarding what appeared to him as a necessary control, by his company, over the public officials of the "Florida Parishes." He reminded local rebels that the Great Southern paid sixty-five percent of the taxes in Washington Parish, and suggested to them that there were other attractive places to live if they did not approve of the policies of the Company. These policies were not highly popular among the native citizenry, many of whom were inclined to be ungrateful at the prospect of being civilized. One of the sops thrown to the native Cerberus was to allow the pristine aristocracy of Franklinton to maintain a nominal control over public affairs.

The taxes paid by the company are low enough, in all conscience. They have, nevertheless, brought good schools to a barren wilderness, and, with good roads, truck transportation to carry the poorest children of what was yesterday a wilderness to well built consolidated schools. Even Negro high school children are given free transportation to a central higher school at Franklinton, an expenditure which elsewhere in the South would be regarded as ridiculously wasteful if not dangerously subversive of the public good. Beautiful paved roads stretch through the "Florida Parishes," testifying to the good relations maintained in the past between the dynasty of lumber and the dynasty of the Louisiana Demos. Those roads also symbolize the civilizing process by which the isolation of the backwoods is being destroyed.

Sullivan is dead, the woods are gone for almost a thousand miles around, and the mills at Bogalusa are half emptied by the depression and by labor saving devices. The shrewd Yankees who have succeeded the florid Irishman in the seat of Empire still rule the barony, but they are more interested in cutting operation costs than in the preservation of the aura of autocracy over every aspect of their feudal estate. Washington Parish never had time to become what Sullivan wanted it to be,

a completely industrialized, civilized land which would redound to the credit and profit of the Great Southern Lumber Company. The mills, the schools, the roads, the new attitude toward racial conflict that tolerates it only as a device for maintaining industrial peace; these are still new social institutions to the men and women who were born in the time when the "Florida Parishes" were wilderness backwoods.

In our little world of Star Creek, and its adjoining community, Bethel, personal relations between white and black were as varied as between States of the North and the South. I had long appreciated the fact that generalizations about the South could not meet such diverse conditions as are presented by such States as Kentucky and Mississippi; and I recognized, too, the vast separation in culture and the pattern of life between such distinct areas as North Alabama and the Black Belt of the same State. I was not prepared for the realization that gradually dawned upon me; that in our little microcosm there were repeated the differences which set off much larger political units from one another. In our little Negro communities in the Northern edge of the Parish, we were as completely isolated from what in other portions of the same small unit would be the characteristic pattern of "race relations" as though we had lived in the Kentucky mountains and our neighbors, ten miles distant, had lived in Central Alabama.

Our Negro neighbors at Star Creek and at Bethel were admirable persons. They were not the modern proto-types of the Homeric "blameless Ethiopians"—but they were and are responsible, industrious, intelligent and self-respecting men and women. They possessed loyalty and character, humour and a quiet grace in their accustomed behaviour.

The natural leader of the Star Creek community was Old Man Jerry Giles. Hardly literate, Mr. Giles had reared a houseful of children and sent them all out to farm or to work honorably in cities and towns North and South. Just once Mr. Giles told me of his boy who had graduated from Howard University and was working for the Government for $175 a month, when "Tuberculosis got him and he come

home to die." It was the crowning sadness of his strong old life, but Mr. Giles did not tell the story for the sake of my sympathy.

It was Mr. Giles who led the drive for the Rosenwald School building, who helped raise a thousand dollars in cash, who rented a saw mill, who directed the men of the community in cutting logs that were finished into lumber for the school at the rented mill. It was Mr. Giles who got the community to set aside every third Saturday to care for the community graveyard, and who thought of ploughing up the whole surface of that weedy spot and sowing it to flowers that made a gorgeous blanket of rich color between the headstones. It was Mr. Giles who organized a Sunday-School in the schoolhouse, to maintain religious interest on every Holy Day of the month in addition to the Fourth Sunday when services were held in the church.

Among our first visitors at Star Creek was a white farmer from close by whose conversation with his Negro acquaintances furnished us with our first shock, as well as our first introduction to the complexities of the situation into which we had fallen. His name, for our purposes here, is Jessie Bent, and when I heard the Negroes calling him "Jessie," and arguing with him on the most intimate terms, I assumed that he was an exceptionally light complexioned mulatto. When I inquired later, however, I found that Jessie Bent was a white man, and the old Negro who told me scoffed at the thought. "Why, me and Jessie was brung up together!" There was in our community another family of Bents—a Negro family; and the two most common family names among our neighbors, the Giles and the Bruces, were parallelled in both races.

Immediately we came to the conclusion that these similarities in family names were the result of the institution of slavery, when the Negroes went by their master's name. It did not take long to find, however, that this conclusion was largely inaccurate. The Negro Bents, and the Giles, and the Bruces, whether white or black, stemmed in most instances from the illegitimate unions of white men with black women in the period after emancipation; and there were still living in the community old patriarchs who directed the destinies of both

white and black children and grandchildren whom they had brought into being.[7]

My wife and I found ourselves in a community where gossip was impossible—for us. Let not the unwary join in the general condemnation of Uncle John Bruce, because of his open drunkenness at the community fair. Uncle John turns out to be Jeff Bent's mother's brother—and, while Jeff was loudest in his shocked criticism, everyone took it with a grain of familial salt. And Mr. Fred, who "didn' believe a public man oughta act like that, does you, Perfesser?", would be pained if you agreed with him, for Uncle John is his sister Nellie's cousin. You wonder why Uncle John is not his—Fred's—cousin, and you find that second and third marriages, and even an infrequent "outside" (illegitimate) connection makes all the world akin in Star Creek and Bethel.

The same thing is true where conversation about the white people is concerned. Where there is not actual blood kinship, sometimes openly recognized by the whites, there is likely to be some very personal relationship between white and black that forbids criticism. Mr. Billie is a white country store keeper at a neighboring crossroads, and the temptation to laugh at him with someone else is almost irresistible. But Mr. Billie is credited by the Negroes with having saved the entire Wilson family from being lynched, and they depend upon him for small loans in times of need which he grants without usury.[8] Old Mr. Bent's conduct in having a mulatto mistress fifty years ago may seem scandalous to some, but he was actually Mr. Fred's father-in-law, once helped to get a brother of Fred's out of the penitentiary, and helped the black husband of his mulatto daughter to buy the forty acres upon which the family now lives.

The result was that we kept our mouths shut about everything except the weather. We resolutely refused to be baited into a discussion of white and black. We listened—and we learned.

John Wilson, the farmer and landowner whose life was shattered by the violent deaths of two sons in 1934 and 1935. He provided Horace Mann Bond with much of the material for "Forty Acres and a Mule."

Tempie Magee Wilson, who took her children to Chicago after the lynching of her son Jerome. She never saw her husband, John Wilson, again.

Alexzine, the eldest daughter of John and Tempie Wilson, who fled the family farm after the shootout on July 21, 1934.

Burnell, the Wilsons' middle daughter.

Onshell, the Wilsons' youngest daughter.

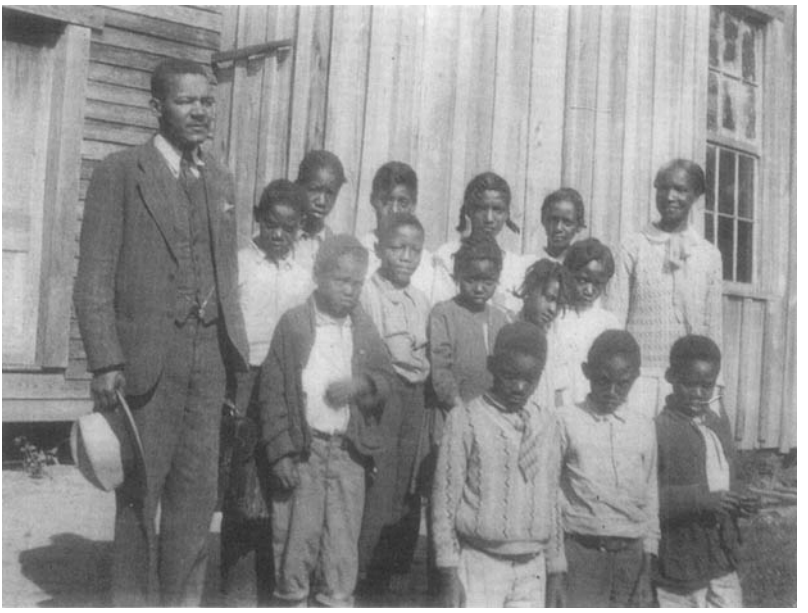
Felton, the youngest Wilson son, who was wounded in the shootout of July 21, 1934.

Wade Magee, Tempie Wilson's father. Paterfamilias and Republican politico, Magee was reputedly a son of slaveholder John Magee.

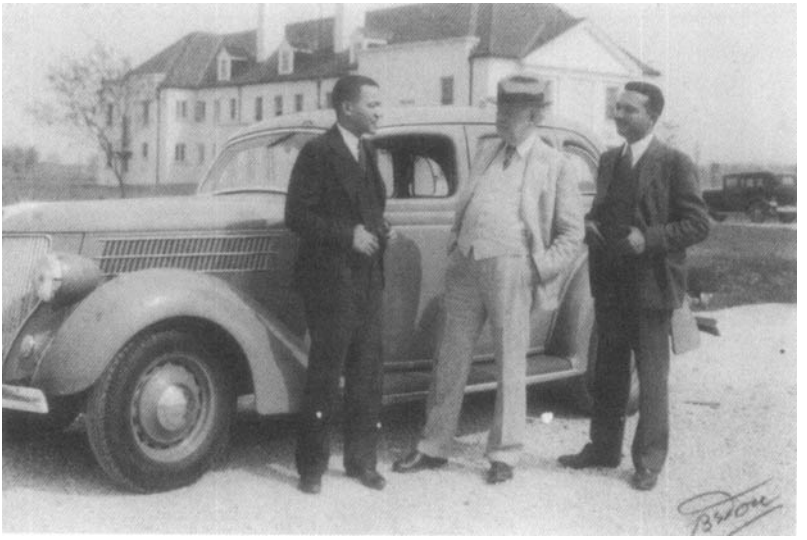
Julia Magee, Wade Magee's wife, the daughter of "old man Eli Magee." Julia Magee ended her days in Chicago.

Ophelia Magee Scarborough, Tempie Wilson's sister, who sheltered the Wilson family in Baton Rouge after they fled Washington Parish.

Rev. A. J. Scarborough, schoolteacher, minister of the Holiness Church, and husband of Ophelia Magee.



Horace Mann Bond while traveling for the Rosenwald Fund.



Horace Mann Bond with his mentor, University of Chicago sociologist Robert Park, and Lewis W. Jones.

Horace Mann Bond as a young man.

Julia W. Bond and Horace Mann Bond at their wedding party, October 11, 1930.

Star Creek Diary

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October 18, 1934.

Mr. Travis is a white man, a renter who has a farm of sixty acres just beyond Mr. Ernest Magee's place. While we were working on the house today, Mr. Travis showed up with four dogs, two hounds, a bird dog, and a poodle.

Mr. Travis has deep set eyes, with an expression almost exactly like the saturnine countenance displayed in the older prints of Andrew Jackson. His hair was thick and brushy, uncut, with a streak or so of grey.

He was talking to Mr. Monroe, whom he called Uncle Monroe,[1] about crops and syrup making. Syrup making is next month. I was not introduced—I never am introduced to white people. Then the conversation veered around to talk of dogs. It seems there are a lot of people who like to poison dogs.

"You know, Uncle Monroe, I don't believe a man oughta keep a mean dog, but I don't believe a feller oughta poison dogs. A man get's a lot of misery keepin' a mean dog. I usedta have a pup that was a bitin' dog—only bitin' dog I ever had. He had scratched up two or three people around the place, and I told 'em all to just pick up a chunk and kill him if he bothered them. None of 'em 'ud do it. I usedta live at a place where my hogs slept right up next to the fence, right in the corner of the yard. Well, somebody chunked three or four biscuits up into the yard, and the next morning three of my hogs were all stretched out, all swelled out. You see, Monroe? That's what a man gets for keepin' a bitin' dog.

"Before I moved down here there was a feller who owned some sheep, and he'd go 'round with a bunch of biscuits in his punting pocket and just toss 'em out whenever he passed by a yard. Suppose one of the leetle ones had picked it up and et it? I'm tellin' you, Monroe, he coulda done it—one of these leetle uns coulda picked up one of them biscuits and et it before youda knowed about it.

"Well, me an Bill Smith took our twenty two rifles and we went over where his sheep was pasturin' and then we just sat there and killed sheep til we got tired. We just piled 'em up. We sent word to him who done it, but he never done nothing about it."

(After this tale, which I could not help but shudder at, I believe that Mr. Travis began to put me in my place. He began to use the word "darky" in his conversation, telling about an old darky who used to get drunk with him.)

After he left, Mr. Monroe told me—

"He's a pretty good man, excep' when he's drinkin. He drinks an awful lot. When he's drinkin' with you, he wants you to do anything he wants you to do. But aside from that, he's a purty good man. He'll treat you right."

The next place to Mr. Monroe's twenty acres is owned by a widow woman. Her husband deserted her. "He jus picked up and lef' her. He was sho' doin fine. He had three milk cows, lots of hogs, two fine saddle horses, and they jus lived. But along came this woman and he tuk up with her, and jus left his wife and all his little uns. He's a living down at Bogalusa now, I heerd 'em say. He's gone down to nuthin. He used to make as high as $10 a day. He could do most anything. He could move houses, he could bore wells, he was jus a man who knowed what to do.

"There's another couple used to live in that tin covered house over beyont the school. The woman used to work over on the railroad near Amite. She was doin' well. At last they busted up, and she bought his half the property.

"Then he took up with Boy Bickham's girl, and they been livin' together ever since, ain't been married or nuthin."

October 21, 1934.
Arrived from New Orleans about 2:00. Mr. Monroe and Ernest at home. This is the Third Sunday and we wanted to be back in time for church, the Baptist church. Both barefoot. Taking their rest. When I said I was going to church, both said that it was too late to go to Jerusalem, but that there were services at St. James, the Methodist church. Ernest dressed to go with us. He looked quite debonair in his Sunday clothes, a vest, a green shirt, a blue pair of trousers, well pressed and very clean, and a good hat, with new tan shoes.

On the road to church we passed several groups. Church was over. We passed the preacher's son with two girls, one of whom was a light complexioned girl, the daughter of Luther Graves, whom Ernest said was his first cousin. At the church a few people were still standing around. The preacher was Reverend Downs, a short light complexioned man, probably a mulatto, with grey-blue eyes. I met several deacons—Mr. Manning, a trustee of the school, Mr. Fortinberry, an old man, very old, who, for all his black skin, looked very much like an old Irishman. Fortinberry told me he had been a deacon for forty-six years. I also saw Mis' Lulu, the wife of Mr. Ranse Magee, and Ranse Magee.

On the way back I went to Clifton to get some cigarettes. The filling station and store of Mr. Young was closed. We drove on up to Warnerton. Here Ernest bought a bottle of beer. It is a rural saloon, as Warnerton is just across the line from Mississippi and there were a number of loungers around.

October 22, 1934. Monday.
We went to Bogalusa. On the way I went to see Superintendent Stringfield. "So you're the boy Mr. Lewis[2] sent down here." "Yessir." After a short conversation in which I used my best white folks manners, Mr. Stringfield agreed to help in getting paint for Blackjack and Star Creek. He told me to see Mr. Fletcher Smith, the school board member for my ward.

At Bogalusa we purchased a small wood stove, no. 7, for the house. $10.00 cash. Cash prices are thirty to forty percent lower than time

prices. Most of the merchants in Bogalusa are Jews. Our stove was purchased from M. Marx, typically urban. The Jews are the only city people in this country, quite as brisk and as cosmopolitan as they would be in Chicago. Several younger Jews were around, talking about the exploits of "Little Monk" Simons in the Tulane-Georgia game Saturday, in which Simons starred. Probably Simons is a Jew.

The used car in which we went to Bogalusa did very well on the pavement, but coming back on the rough roads the distributor began to miss badly. We just managed to get home.

October 23, 1934. Tuesday.

We gathered up our things and moved up to the house. It took two loads on Mr. Monroe's wagon. Miss Lulu came over and watched vigorously. I put in screens, which are largely ornamental, considering the numerous cracks in the walls, and the open spaces under the eaves.

While we were moving, Miss Lulu told about the news that Mr. Alec Burton died last night. He had been po'ly for some time. Mr. Manning had brought the news around to get some men to help dig the grave. There was mild speculation over the time of the burial. The news was received quite philosophically. "Well, Monroe," said Miss Lula, "he's gone the way all of us have to go!" "Yes," said Mr. Monroe, with great solemnity.

"I guess they'll be buryin' him today" said Mr. Monroe. "Yes," said Miss Lula, squinting at the hot sun. "I'm sure they will."

I went in the old Ford with Ernest to tell some of his cousins to come help with the potato grubbing on Wednesday. The Ford behaved abominably, finally stopping at intervals. Ernest told me on the way of a spot where he had got drunk with a cousin of his off of corn beer, the preparation of which sounds like the formula for what I used to know as "Choc" or "Choctaw Beer" in Oklahoma. It is the vilest drink known to man, actually a simple mash strained, and produces a sick drunk. The cousin on this occasion, after finishing a jug, sat down on a bridge, then crawled into the swamp until he sobered up. There is not much talk of drunkenness, or much evidence of it. The people are too busy

to get drunk. Whenever the subject is mentioned, reference is made to Mr. Travis, the white tenant who lives not far off, and whose carouses seem to be classic.

On the way we passed a woman getting peas in the garden. She waved. "That's the woman who likes the beatin's," said Ernest. It appears that this woman claims that she must have her husband beat her once a month, to keep her happy. Whether the people attach more than a casual interest to this phenomenon is unknown to me.

Coming back from Franklinton I picked up a man, a relative of the Mr. Burton who died. The roads were very bumpy, and he sat on the back seat. The bumping made him sick. I stopped to let him heave. He got off two or three miles from home to walk through the swamp. He protested that it was not the bumping, but that he had been dizzy at spells, and was bilious. After he got out, Ernest told me, "I spec' the trouble with him is that he's knocked up his wife again. He's good for that." Although I understood the phrase perfectly, I did not see the question, and asked Ernest what he meant. "I mean, he got his wife in a family way again. You know that gets the men too, like it gets the women."

The bye roads are terrible, but are graveled along wherever a white man lives, even if surrounded with Negroes.

I went to Clifton and Ernest went with me. He advised me to go to Mr. Willie's store, Mr. Willie Bickham. Mr. Bickham is an old country gentleman at whose store I phoned New Orleans from Saturday. His wife was in today. I had on overalls, and it helped me in buying a tub, marked a dollar. She knocked off a dime. Mr. Bickham, Mr. Monroe told me, is a very good white man. He is credited with having helped get the Wilson family off as light as they have, so far, after killing the deputy, and of averting the lynching of the family. Mr. Monroe also told me that whenever he wanted a dollar or two, Mr. Willie would let him have it. Apparently there is a relationship of dependence between these Negro owners and the store keepers much like that dependence between tenants and landlords. Ernest has an account with Mr. Bickham. Most of the Negroes seem to have accounts with one or the other of the store owners in Clifton.

October 24, Wednesday.
Today was devoted to potato picking by the Magees. Several families of their relation helped. They don't seem to have a suitable plow, but borrowed it from a neighbor. (A two horse grubber.)

Thursday, October 25, 1934.
The potato digging, which had been deferred until the last day of the full moon, was not completed Wednesday. Thursday morning a light rain fell beginning at 4 o'clock. Mr. Monroe was greatly disturbed, because to put the potatoes in the potato house while they were wet was an inducement to rotting. Mr. Monroe and Ernest had received cotton tickets, notifying them that they could sell more of their cotton if they got the tickets. I carried them to Franklinton, where they waited in line for the tickets.

At the Ford place, I got my old Ford again. The Negro helper seems to be much more intelligent than any of the white mechanics.

I came back through Black Jack, where I met with the trustees of the school at 2:30 o'clock. The trustees are Mr. Melton Magee, Mr. Nelson, and Mr. Luther Bickham. Mr. Melton Magee takes the lead here as elsewhere.[3] I learned that the people here raised $500 in cash and contributed $600 in labor in building this school. They had raised money at other times to put up additional buildings. The plot is three acres. A demonstration garden is on the lot. There are three buildings—the plot is planted with a hedge around the driveway, there is a canna bed, an excellent pump, and sanitary privies. All are in a state of disrepair.

I was somewhat confused at the fact that evidently I was expected to tell exactly what I was there for. I talked in generalities about my mission, but it was clear that all felt that I had said nothing. It was agreed that we were to go to see Mr. Fletcher Smith, the board member for this district or ward, that afternoon. Mr. Magee, the principal, also a Magee, and myself drove over. The member was not at home. His wife was there. We went to the backdoor. Mrs. Smith was quite polite. We made arrangements to see Mr. Smith the next evening. The Smith home is comfortable, Mrs. Smith plainly dressed. The house has

a delco light attachment, is screened, with an artesian well. Most of the white homes in this neighborhood, where of well-off owners, have these conveniences.

I then drove back to Star Creek. My wife told me that a strange man had come in the back yard while I was gone, and had frightened her very much. He was either a white man or a mulatto, but she believed that he might have been a white man, because he didn't talk like a Negro at all. It turned out that this was Mr. Ed Magee, Mr. Monroe Magee's step-son, Ernest's brother, probably a half-brother to Ernest.[4]

As I walked down the hill, I saw Ed in the wagon. He was going to haul potatoes. Evidently he felt a sense of shame at seeing me, a fellow city man (I had on my city clothes), and his first words, although I had never seen him before, were, "They've made a farmer of me already." (Indicating his overalls.) It developed that Ed works in Bogalusa, with a lumber company. Mrs. Gabe says that he is frequently taken for a white man, and it caused a great deal of laughter when it developed that he had thought that my wife was a white woman, and that he too had been frightened or surprised to see a white woman in the place where he expected to see the Magees. Ed seems to be a thoroughly urbanized (small town) individual. His tales of trips to New Orleans and Brookhaven and Mobile quite angered Ernest.

October 26, 1934. Friday.

This morning I got up late, about 8:00. By the time breakfast had been cooked, water drawn, and wood cut, it was about 10. I walked toward the school. On the way I passed by Mr. Monroe's, and found Orsell there.[5] He had come earlier, but they had not seen any fire up at our house (smoke) and so he had just waited. The potatoes were all in the house.

At the schoolhouse Mr. Crane, the vocational teacher, met me effusively.[6] Mr. Crane is a tall, somewhat stout reddish yellow man, of fifty or more. He has only a lower set of false teeth, or perhaps the upper half was just absent when I saw him. The sight of his perfect row of lower teeth against the red gums of his upper jaws reminded me of nothing so much as of carrion against stripped bone. Mr. Crane had

met me at Franklinton during the Fair, when I had carried some exhibits for the Star Creek school down there.

He advanced enthusiastically with outstretched hand. "You're Professor Bond, the gentleman working for the Rosenwald Fund, I believe. You know, Barker told me about you. I'm certainly glad to meet you. I was just asking somebody if you were here. I was about to come over to your house. Old Boy Bickham told me, 'Professor, he's a man something like you. Sometime we see him in overalls and sometimes he's dressed up.'"

I answered in between as best I could. I asked him for the estimate on the paint. At Blackjack the young principal, Magee, had prepared an elaborate memorandum figuring out the number of square feet for inside and outside surfaces and the specified number of gallons of paint required. This had come to around 102 gallons, the estimated cost being about $275, a staggering sum in my comprehension, so far as presenting the bill to the School Board for one item for a Negro school.

Mr. Crane seized a piece of scratch paper and on the basis of his memory, figured out 34 gallons. He stated that the school board would give him that. The school board, he said, would give him anything he wanted. They had just given him $100 for three toilets. He scoffed at the Black Jack estimate.

Evidently Mr. Crane, a good white folks nigger, was willing to give the Board an estimate for paint that he knew to be woefully deficient and that would result in inferior results. The young man, Magee, had not yet learned how to do this.

I then asked the other teacher, who was teaching a class in the same room, Mr. W. E. Sibley, to let me see his register. The register was in frightful shape. The roll had not been called for several days. Mr. Sibley comes to school whenever he wants to, apparently, until my arrival, since when he has been more careful. Mr. Sibley told me at once that the register was not quite accurate, as some of the children had been promoted. I then asked him to check the names of those who had been promoted. He took the register and wrote after several names, "po[*sic*]moted."

After copying out some facts from the register, I took my departure. Going back to the house, I went with Orsell and Ernest to Tylertown to get some lumber for a table and for screen doors.

Coming back, Orsell worked on the doors for a few hours. He improvised the carpenter's device by which correct angles are sawed, to the great admiration of one or two of my neighbors who had come over to draw water.

As I had to go to Franklinton in the evening, I suggested to Orsell that he knock off and let me drop him by his home. He did so, and on the way we fell into conversation about schools. Orsell, I do not think can write or read. He told me that the schools were very bad. His little boy had gone to school under Miss Dyson at Star Creek, and he considered her a good teacher. He had learned how to recognize all his alphabets, and "he could print his name as pretty as you please." But he was now enrolled at Bethel, and he hadn't learnt anything. "Professor, you know we don't have us any good teachers. The schools ain't much good. Now, they open up school, and they get ready for the Fair. Then they get ready for a big Christmas concert. Then after Christmas they start the children workin' for closin' concerts, and they don't teach 'em anything."

I asked him what sort of a man was Professor Crane. Professor Crane, by the way, had called his class of three little urchins together while I was copying the names from the register. He used the class to recite his own virtues to me and to cast innuendoes at Professor Magee at Black Jack who had displaced him, both for my benefit.

"Now boys, what is a dual purpose chicken?"

One little boy replied, "It's a hen what lays eggs."

"Is that all a dual purpose chicken is?"

Another little boy said brightly, "It lays and can be et, too."

"That's right," said Professor Crane enthusiastically.

(It appears to me that here is precisely the basic problem of vocational agriculture in these schools. The teachers are not intelligent enough to translate the verbiage of the agricultural professors into terms understandable by the children; nor do they have the respect of the community as practical farmers in their own right.)

Professor Crane went on with the lesson.

"Now boys, what can you do with you peanuts? You can plant 'em, can't you? And you can raise you some chickens, and you can raise you some cane, and some peanuts, and you can exhibit 'em at the Fair, and maybe you can win some money. I won six dollars with my Plymouth Rocks at the Fair. Now, you can't expect a man to tell people to raise fine purebred duroc hogs if he ain't got some himself, or some Plymouth Rock hens if he cain't do it hisself, can you?" (This a crack for my benefit at Magee, also a crack at showing me what a fine practical farmer he, Crane, was.)

To continue with Orsell on Crane. "He's just a windbag, professor. Why, some of the young folks got up a petition to get rid of him, but he's in with these white folks—Stringfield and Barker and Bickham are mighty tricky. Whenever Barker and Crane want to put anything over they get Stringfield to write it out here under his name. They're full of tricks."

I asked Orsell about Mr. Barker. "Well," he said, "he's a Barker." I asked him what he meant, family or name. He answered, "Both. His father was a deacon in the church, and one of the biggest rascals around here."

Coming back from town I passed Mr. Bickham—Boy—with Luther Graves, the car stuck with a blowout. Mr. Bickham was gentleman enough to stick with the party in distress. Miss Gabe had gone to town too. Little Oliver Graves was along. Orsell had asked me to carry his little children, a little girl and a boy, up to their grandfather's house, Mr. Monroe.

About 5:30 I went with Mr. Boy Bickham over to see Fletcher Smith, the white school board member for this ward. On the way Mr. Bickham told me about the teachers. "Professor, we have just cheap-grade teachers here." I asked him about the method of appointment. It seems that Mr. Stringfield won't send anybody to Star Creek whom the people don't like. Mr. Bickham was quite frank about Mr. Crane. "Professor, he's just a cheap-grade teacher—about the best we knows about out here. He's in with these white folks. The white folks raised

him. He used to pick cotton down in the country with Stringfield and Bateman, and they likes him. He's jus' a good ole nigger, ain't got much sense."

Mr. Bickham on the way also told us about the Cemetery, which is currently reported to be a blaze of color. Mr. Bickham said they plowed it up and sowed flower seed broadcast with the grass seed. "Whatever we has to do, whether the's anything to be done or not, we jus' meets at the Cemetery every second Saturday and works on it iffen there's anything to be done."

I asked Mr. Bickham whose idea the beautifying of the Cemetery was. It was his idea, he said, modestly, quietly, yet proudly.

At Mr. Fletcher Smith's we found Mr. Melton Magee waiting for us. Knowing the expectation of many white men in the South that Negroes should take off their hats when speaking to them, I left my hat in the car and went up bareheaded. I got my first shock when Mr. Melton Magee introduced me to Mr. Smith, not as Professor, not as Doctor, not as Dean, but as "Mister Bond." I do not know of a single Negro principal or teacher in the South who would have done that.

There was no air of deference or slavishness about either Old Man "Boy" Bickham or Melton Magee. They were dignified, self-assured, polite but not to be kidded. Mr. Bickham told Mr. Smith that the school needed "deskes"—that the Star Creek school never had had enough "deskes," although the school board had promised them. He told Mr. Smith that they had some second-hand "deskes" from the white school, and they had always hoped for enough, but they had worked hard for the school, and "they'd wiped their mouths and said nothin," but they knew they ought to have deskes all the time. He told Mr. Smith that the route of the trucks left much to be desired, the children had to walk too far. Mr. Smith told the story about his wife, who had to walk to Warrenton when she was a child, to school. He said that a child who could get to a truck was mighty lucky. Mr. Bickham was supposed to agree, but he said nothing. He maintained an impressive silence that was indubitable evidence that he considered Mr. Smith's illustration beyond the point.

Mr. Smith told one of the familiar jokes I have heard so frequently—he said that "the boys over at Star Creek would come to the school and work and when they went home they would carry a pocket full of nails with them." Mr. Bickham was supposed to laugh. He did not, and it was Mr. Smith and not Mr. Bickham who was obliged to laugh that embarrassed laugh that usually follows on the part of the Negroes.

Mr. Smith told how good the Board had been, and how much he had done for the schools.

"Yassuh, Mr. Smith, but I'se talkin' about what Star Creek needs now."

The manner of both Magee and Bickham was in utter contrast to everything that I have ever experienced so far as the attitude of Negro teachers to superintendents and school board members is concerned.

October 27, Saturday.
Worked on the house.

October 28, Sunday.
Orsell came up to pay me a visit, looking for Ernest. He was all dressed up. He told me of his life as a tenant. The woman for whose husband he works is very fond of his two children, and would like for them to stay at her house. He told me that his wife's sister's husband had suddenly fallen sick, and gone into spasms after a violent headache. He was halfway expected to die, but was better now.

Orsell said that he made it a little better than many of the owners. Jeff Burkhalter, the prosperous Negro tenant, made twenty bales for Mr. Jeff King this year. Orsell works on halves. He made six bales this year. He also works constantly at odd jobs.

(Miz Gabe said that more work could be had on the schools from owners than from tenants, because the white folks said when their tenants came to work on the schoolhouse that "they was just wastin' their times; they calls that idlin.")

Orsell is a carpenter, repairs shoes, drills wells, cuts hair, and has other arts which yield him a steady income.

He ordered a dresser-wardrobe from Sears-Roebuck for $15.51, cash. Both his wife and he have difficulty in writing, so he asked Miz Gabe to write out the order for him. Miz Gabe asked Julia to do it, and Julia asked me to do it.

Orsell says the land now hereabouts is very cheap, the Great Southern now selling some cut-over land for as low as $4.00 per acre.

His wife's sister, Annie Mae Conley, is now at Charity Hospital in New Orleans. Orsell says that it doesn't cost anything to go there, except fare there. His wife was very puny until he carried her there and they operated on her and she came back and she has been fine ever since. The entire cost to Orsell was a round-trip ticket of $1.50 to New Orleans.

Saturday, November 10.

Lotsa folks is a grindin the cane. I went down to Franklinton today and I took with me Mr. Monroe. I went over to the school house when I got up, about seven, and they want [there wasn't] nobody there. I cames on home and carpentered around the house all mornin'. Miz Gabe and the Widow Graves and one of her chillun, a young gal, and one of Luther Graves lil white haired chillun, they come by and picked some cotton outin Miz Gabe's patch for to make some mattresses with.[7]

When I went by the schoolhouse on the way to town, I found seven or eight men helpin Green Bickham finish sealin the schoolhouse and a puttin in the window casins and things. The mostes of us jes sat roun and joreed[8] aw'ile Green was a-finishin the casins, for, like Boy Bickham, he said, "Wesa bout reached the pint where we caint do no more, perfesser, but wese'll have to let Green finish 'er up." They knewed about me a-comin over early like, and Mr. Monroe, he said, "Perfesser, I doan see how you kin lay in bed as late as you does. I couldna no more a do that than I could fly. Me, I allus gits up in the mawnin at fo o'clock."

Then Mr. Griffith a-said, "Monroe, you coulda lie in bed that late iffen you had somebody to lie in bed with." And they all busted out

laffin, and they asted me, "What about it, perfesser?" And I saw that Mr. Monroe was a-blushin like, and I said, "I ain't a-goin to say nuthin bout that." And they said, "Perfesser is jist a makin it easy on Monroe."

On the way to Franklinton I picked up a man at Mr. Willie Bickham's store, Mr. Seymour. Mr. Willie's store got robbed t'uther night, so Miz Bickham tole me. They took nigh about a thousand dollar worth of stuff out, so she said. The sheriff is atter em, she said. He thinks its been done by some of these folks that works in cahoots with these peddler folks, that goes aridin aroun the country sayin they sells lower than anybody else. That's how they kin do it, sez Miz Bickham, and they ain't got no license, either.

Mr. Seymour joreed Mr. Monroe about agettin married again, but Mr. Monroe, he never seemed to mind it none atall. He told Seymour, joreein' like, "But you didn't see that woman that a come up here f'om Nawleans to see me, tuther day."

I expecs that Mr. Monroe is agoin to get married real soon, and Julia and I'sa helpin hit along. Now that weve done got the house all sealed, I expecs that Mr. Ernest and Miz Gabe agoin to move into the house as soon as we leave, and Mr. Monroe agoin to take hisself another wife.

Miz Gabe says Mr. Monroe ought to take hisself another wife, acause his nature is agoin to his head iffen he dont.

In Franklinton Mr. Monroe abought hisself fifty syrup cans. Itsa mighty cold today, and Mr. Monroe likely to make syrup any day now. Hes mos got thru strippin the cane, he startin to work at hit early in the mawnin.

When I got home this afternoon, I found that the Graves girl had put on a clean dress and come back to see Julia. She told her all about the killin. There was a preacher a stayin at John Wilson's house, and the white man came and quarrelled with the boys, John Wilson was agone away. The mule already had been dipped at another vat, and the

ranger made like he was agoin to go into the pen and git the mule out. And one of the boys cussed him. Alla that trouble came about because that boy cussed that white man. Then the white man went and called up the sheriff, they had been speechless for two weeks, and they wasn't on good terms nohow. Well, the sheriff come, and the shootin began. The gals was so scared that two of em jumped offen the porch and started runnin through the woods. One of em caught her foot in the barbed wire and purty nigh tore her foot off. The white men said, Come back or we'll shoot, and one of the gals was so desprit she jus come on back. When the shootin started, the preacher went out back and he found the sheriff dead and the ranger gettin' ready to kill all of the family, and he went up to him and he said, don't you do that, and he didn't. One of the neighbors awent down to the house, he was a white man, and he asked what was the trouble, and he saw the boy was shot, and he went back to telephone fo a doctor, and the deputy was alyin out kilt, and he didn't see him or know he was kilt.

The gal that ran away kept on arunnin and she got to Mr. Jeff King's place, and Mr. King, he let her stay there all night, and afterward let her stay on his place til things quieted down like.[9] One of the boys, he runned off into the woods behint Mr. Monroe's brother's place and the boy, he slep out in the woods and Mr. Monroe's brother fed him durin the day. When they catched him, they arrested all of Mr. Monroe's brother's folks and took em to jail at Franklinton.

That night, said Oretha Graves, I heerd somethin a stirrin out in the yard, and I went and peeped. They was two white men a sittin out in the yard, a sayin nothin, just a-sittin. They was white men at all the colud folkses house who had cars, and they was a-watchin to see that nobuddy helped this Wilson boy get away in a car. They didn't say nuthin to nobody, excepen one woman's house where they made her make em some coffee.

They was a crowd that acome to the jail at Franklinton that night and wanted to lynch the whole family, and theyda killed everybody in that jailhouse, but they was some white men there that tole em, if you tries to take these folks, we'll shoot. And then they got the soldiers.

(These Negroes are certainly brave people. Imagine feeding a fugitive from justice when you know that detection may mean sudden death, certainly imprisonment! And old John Wilson has moved into a place on the Franklinton black top, and he says, sez Orethia, "they ainta nobuddy agoin to do anythin to me.")

At night I went over to see Mr. Fletcher Smith. He was amilkin cows out in the back, and when I yelled Hello, at the back gate, Miz Smith tole me to go out to the dairy barn and I'da find him there. Mister Smith talked real polite to me, while I stood and watched him milkin. I asted him about the dairy business, and hit want much, to hear him say. It haint been long senct they jus had dairy plants aroun here to handle milk, and most of the folks was too interested in lumberin. Now its acomin.

I asted Mister Smith why the folks roun Star Creek didn't like milk. He said it twas because the run of em never had enny milk. And then there was the way they et the milk, right hot out of the bowl from milkin. Nobuddy'd like milk like that.

"They's a heap a chillen roun here now acomin up with no milk," sez his son, who'se a milkin alongside of 'im. "It sho grieves my heart," sez Mister Smith, "to see chillen acomin up without no milk. My family, why we uses two gallons of milk a day." (Mister Smith mus weigh nigh onto three hundred pound.)

Mister Smith's boy, he starts talkin to Mister Smith about what he's agoin to do tonight. Mister Smith thinks he'll go over and set up with old Mr. King, who's been mighty po'hly of late. Young Mr. Smith thinks he'll be agoin to the show. Tim McCoy is on in a picter. Young Mister Smith told about the way Tim McCoy acted in his last picter.

Atter they got thru milkin, I goes into the yard to talk to Mister Smith. Mister Smith sits down on the runnin board of my car, like he was agoing to talk to me side by side, but w'en I asts him to let me get a book outen the car, he changes his mind and sits down on the runnin board of the milk truck about ten feet away. Mister Smith lights hisself a pipe and sits down. Atter a while, his son acomes out and drives off, and Mister Smith acomes over and sits down besides me. The car rattles all over.

I tells Mister Smith what I'm a tryin to do, and I shows him the book. Mister Smith, he sez that he reads a whole lot, mosly papers, but he sho does appreciate that book and he'll be a lookin at it. He tells me about the way the country used to be, tarnation wild, real desperado country, about thirty years ago. They was some ignormous things done then, sez Mister Smith.

We talks aroun and aroun. Mister Smith tells me about the HOLC.[10] It ain't no good, sez Mr. Smith, because any man that kin git credit from the bank can now get money and get it cheaper than he can git from the scheme. They's too many people alookin for somethin for nuthin. Why, sez Mister Smith, I hadda boy awurkin fer me, and I was a payin him to plow up some land to sow some oats last Fall. He comes to me, and he sez, Mister Smith, I'm agoin to sign up with the relief folks. I tole him, Boy, do you know whut yure doin? And he said, Well, they pays $1.50 a day, and they pays off every night, and I'm a goin to sign up. So I pays him off, and he goes down and signs up. Well, his brother signed up too. He didn't get no card to come to work for about six weeks, and w'en they found out his brother wasa workin too, they laid him off. And he coulda been workin fur me all the time, iffen he had awanted to.

Sunday, November 11, 1934.

Went to Sunday School. Mr. Manning was Superintendent, Mr. Barker secretary. Mr. Bickham asked me to teach the class, but I refused. They are evidently reluctant to expose a supposed ignorance by discussing matters before me. Mr. Bickham then took up the task. He was, evidently, nervous. The lesson was a Peace lesson for Armistice Day. Mr. Bickham skipped, in his reading, Armistice, apparently because he couldn't read it.

The real meaning of the text (if there is any real meaning) eludes these people because of their inability to read. The reading of the Bible yields only the most highly formalized reactions. Key words presenting difficulties in pronunciation are entirely sloughed over. No one seemed to grasp the meaning of the "Peace" lesson. "Peace" was interpreted to mean personal adjustment in the community, with no thought

of international conflict. The emphasis in the readings from Galatians was on "morals," witchcraft, idolatry, etc.

When I raised the question of a conflict between pacifism and Law, the interpretation given to Law was the Mosaic Law. No notion seemed to exist of a possible conflict between authority of the State and the Authority of the conscience. The only person who seemed to get my point was one of the Barkers, a bitter faced man very fond of argumentation, more intelligent and better read (or a better reader) than the others, who seems to be heartily disliked by the other men, who, apparently, are more successful farmers, but not as sophisticated. Barker was the only one of the elder men who had on a store suit instead of overalls. He was not the Barker who is the Secretary.

My question about war and the higher law, designed to arouse an argument, succeeded, but the argument was specious in that the other side, composed of Mr. Bickham, Ranse Magee, and others, didn't see the point at all, and were greatly annoyed.

Apparently the only real reason for the Sunday School is that it provides an open forum for debate on topics concerning which there is *some* small fund of information on the part of all concerned. The youngsters take delight in reading verses loudly, showing their superior ability to read as compared to the elders. In last week's Sunday school one young girl, when an argument came up over the difference between charity and kindness, had recourse to a dictionary which she took out of the school bookcase.

The room at the school used for community meetings and for Sunday school is referred to as the "Holy Room." The larger room to which an addition has just been made is the secular room, in which dances, concerts, and affairs of a social nature are held.

This evening I went with my wife to visit Mr. Bickham. Willie Pearl, Mrs. Lu, and Miz Gabe went along. The talk was mostly about old time dancing. Mr. Bickham was quite fond of the idea, and told us about old time fiddlers. The new dances, he said, didn't amount to nothing. But when the old folks useter dance, they just dansted until they was wet all over with sweat. There was old Doc, who could really fiddle a tune. Old Doc, he would come to a frolic, and all the boys and

girls they would just about waship old Doc. They'd almost as soon a-spread palm leaves down befo him, alike he was the crowned king. They'd ajus line up befo him, all awaitin to dance, and old Doc, he would ajus take his fiddle and start apattin his foot and play

ta-ta-taroo—lee———

And they would all ajus about start to break down, but old Doc would stop, and he'd start up agin

ta-ta-taroo—lee———

and then he'da stop. And all the boys and gals woulda yell at old Doc, tellin him, Come on, Doc, go on and play, but old Doc woulda jus start up agin

ta-ta-taroo—lee———

and then one of the niggers (Excuse me, perfesser, I jes will say that word) woulda say, I knows w'ats the matter wid old Doc, he ain't had no whiskey—and sure nough, somebody wouda give old Doc the bottle, and he'd up it and drink til it would be mos nigh empty, and then old Doc, he'd start agin—

ta-ta-taroo—lee, ta-ta-taroo,
le-a-di-lee-dee, ta-roo, taroo

and by this time old Doc, he'da been gone. He'da never stop playin the wile the bottle was up to his mouth.

(Miz Gabe told Julia about some woman who had abeen takin too much alum to keep from a-havin any more babies, and she got real puny, the doctors had to give her some body elses blood. Alum, said Miz Gabe, acts jes like persimmons.)

Miz Lu say she don't keer for Jubilees singin in the church. It's alright in the schoolhouse, but it ain't right in the church. Miz Gabe asked her, whyn't it alright in the church? They does it. (Jubilee, these quasi-minstrel troupes with secular songs mixed with others.)

November 14, 1934.

Walked toward the Cemetery today. We were directed to a "cemetery" by several people, walked for miles, and finally reached a white cemetery where a grave was being dug. I asked Jim Burkhalter, Mr. King's tenant, who was there, how far to the colored graveyeard. Both whites and Negroes were digging the grave. We walked on and at the next house found that Mr. Bennie King had died. We walked on to the St. James Cemetery (it proved afterward not to be the cemetery of which Mr. Bickham had spoken, and for which we were looking). From here we walked on to home, by Mr. Bennie King's, and saw a group of white men standing out front talking. A Negro woman crossing the road stopped as we walked up as though to greet us, but when she saw that she did not know us, passed on. All conversation stopped as we walked by the group of white men, who looked at us closely.

Just a little beyond we passed Uncle Dave Griffin, who, in his work-a-day overalls, was on his way to the graveyard, for Mr. King's buryin'. He had been a-shuckin' some cane, and was awful hard rushed, but Mr. King had been a good old man, and he thought'e ought to go down to the buryin. All of them Kings is nice folks.

Passed on. At the school house we met Mr. Monroe on his mule, on the way to the buryin. At one of the houses we had been told that there were some colored folks buried in the white graveyard.

Later in the day, Julia saw Mr. Monroe, and asked him about the colored folks buried in the white folks graveyard. Mr. Monroe was a-sittin on the gallery, Julia and Miz Gabe in the kitchen.

Miz Gabe said, "Mr. Monroe's wife's mother buried there, ain't she, Mr. Monroe?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Monroe, "she's buried there, and a sister of hers is buried there, too." Mr. Monroe did not seem to speak with approval.

"Shure 'nough!" said Julia, animatedly and provocatively.

"Yes," he said, with what seemed like bitterness, but what may have been only hunger, as he had been workin' in the cane patch all afternoon and hadn't had any dinner yet, "but don't nobuddy know where their grave is, though. They weren't never marked."

Mrs. Graves, called a widow-woman, whose husband has deserted

her, and who has six girls and numerous boys, was married to a man whom Mr. Monroe constantly berates as a worthless fellow who was doing real good, but never mentions the fact that he, Graves, was Mr. Monroe's first wife's brother. In conversation with Ernest the next day, it develops that Mr. Graves and Mr. Monroe's wife were the children of Mr. Tommie Graves, a white man, still living, now paralytic.[11] It is also Mr. Monroe's wife's mother, by whom Mr. Tommie had a family of mulatto children, who is buried in the white graveyard, and probably her sister had a mulatto family by another or the same white man. Mr. Bennie Graves, whom we met as a caller at the Magee home on the first day of our presence here, and who was "raised up with Mr. Monroe and Mr. Bickham," is related to Mr. Tommie, probably his son. I asked Mr. Ernest if Mr. Tommie looked out for his colored relatives. Mr. Tommie had one boy, he said, who lived out in Texas now, who used to claim Uncle Pete wherever he was. "Sho, Uncle Pete? I know Uncle Pete." He'd do it anywhere, even amongst White folks. You know white folks don't usually like to claim their colored kin." I asked Ernest if Mr. Tommie did anything for his colored kin.

"Sure," said Ernest. "He's known for law, he knows more law than anybuddy in the Parish. Whenever any of em gets in trouble, he goes down to Franklinton and talks around, and pretty soon nuthin is heard about it."

It is also probable that the land of all of these Negroes was acquired by the help of their white relatives. Mr. Monroe for example paid $400 for his place. Mr. Ernest paid $400 for his place. Mr. Graves has a farm next to it. Now, it is quite probable, and will bear investigation, that Mr. Tommie paid the money for Mr. Monroe's farm (his daughter's husband) or for Mr. Graves's farm (his son). Ernest accordingly is his grandson. (Ernest never mentioned the latter.)

There is a Burris family in Franklinton. (White and black.)

Mr. Monroe's father was married three times and had three sets of children. Willie Pearl's father was not Ranse Magee's daughter, although she was Miz Lu's daughter. Willie Pearl is a light mulatto.

Miz Gabe is no relation to Willie Pearl or to Miz Lu, but they call each other "Cousin."

Asking Mr. Ernest about present day relations between white and black women, he says that kind of thing doesn't go on now days. It just happened in the olden time, when the women worked around the white folks and couldn't help themselves. Mr. Ernest's relation to Mr. Tommie was always treated with utter silence, not even implicitly.

Yet, after stating that white women who ran with Negroes in Bogalusa were bad women, Ernest said sadly, here and there there's one who forgets herself,—and Perfesser, a white man and a black woman's the freest thing on earth. They can do what they please.

At the school, Mr. Crane has just got the lumber for a new toilet for the school, and is planning to put it up. The girls and boys were playing basketball. Mr. Sibley refereeing and coaching, not apparently knowing much about anything.

Cane cutting still going on, all day, Miz Gabe helping out in the field. Mr. Monroe has almost finished his patch.

November 15, 1934.

Took Mr. Ranse Magee, Mr. Ernest, Mr. Fletcher Bickham, and Mr. Sibley to town today to see Mr. Greenlaw about the dynamo for the lights for the school. At the schoolhouse, saw Mr. Crane. He reproached me before them all for not having told him that Mr. Lewis was coming next week. Without thinking, I told him that I thought I had told him—and I thought I had. The boys were out working on the steps. He was trying to get the toilets up in preparation for Mr. Lewis' visit. He was also greatly worried about Mr. Lewis' impending visit. I had attached no importance to it, and so told him before the men, that I thought it would be better just to let the school go ahead normally without making any fuss about the visit. The men and Mr. Crane seemed to take this as an affront. It was unfortunate on my part. Sibley took the occasion as a knock at Mr. Crane. I must go over and apologize to Mr. Crane tomorrow.

This evening Miz Gabe, Willie Pearl, and Mr. Ernest came up, Miz Gabe intent on making candy. She brought the cocoa, which she had had Ernest buy in Franklinton, and some lard, in order to get Julia to make the candy, or to show her how it was done. Julia had been

making candy, and giving it to them, and their love for sweets led the men to insist that Miz Gabe make some like it. Miz Gabe had told Julia that "I tole him that if I didn't have to spend so much time cookin cornbread and collards I'd have time to make some candy." They had asked Miss Hynaneatha to show them how, but at the school meeting today when the women meet, Miss Hynaneatha said that she had left her recipe book at home and that they would make pine needle baskets again. This they did. Apparently this is the only crafts taught in the normal schools, for I have seen it done everywhere. But the women of the community really imagine these frightful little things to be beautiful.

The candy making went on apace while I filled out the loan blank under the National Housing Act for Mr. Ernest. He wants to borrow the smallest amount, $100. He figured up his income as amounting to $300 a year, the Act calling for loans not in excess of an amount one-fifth the yearly income. He had only the vaguest ideas as to the manner in which he was going to use the money, roofing and fencing being statements of $57 approximately.

This illustrates the bad influence we are on this community. Our few primitive repairs have inspired emulation. There is lime in the privy of Mr. Monroe, imitating the lime on our privy. Now, that lime costs 2 cents a pound, and yearly would total at least $3.00, for the cleansing of a privy for a household of four. That would be one percent of the yearly total income of the family for lime for a privy.

Now, Julia's candy has cost at least 40 cents the batch, using a can of condensed milk (Borden's), about an eighth of a pound of butter, and cocoa, and sugar. Miz Gabe's candy, using plain milk, the rough lard used hereabouts, and sugar, is, of course, much cheaper, but it doesn't taste as well.

Now, should Julia teach the women to sew the simple things she can sew?

That will cost them money for thread and cloth.

Mr. Ernest tells me that they raise all feed for the stock. They feed half rations to the mules after the fields done grazed over. They work a

mule on thirty ears of corn when they're working him, and feed him ten a day when not, during the winter. That way, he said, they keep a mule "mud fat."

November 16, 1934.

Went over to school this morning. At 10:30 all of the children out in the yard cleaning up, the steps being repaired, and inside, the rooms being cleaned, Mr. Crane located in his office quite immaculately.

Had a conversation with Mr. Crane. Told him that I was sorry for my rudeness of yesterday. Mr. Crane was handsome about it, (to me, apparently in his old manner of duplicity, still harboring a grudge for not being told of Mr. Lewis' coming, but plying with me the old trade of fooling the white folks, in my case, someone in whom authority was vested. I doing likewise. Our conversation proceeded on this basis.) I told Mr. Crane how deeply appreciative I was of his great services to the school and to the community. I do not think he was fooled. However, it was one of those conversational demands of the situation.

Mr. Crane went on to tell me how deeply he appreciated my giving information about the coming of Mr. Lewis. "You know how it is, professor, somebody always wants to sort of freshen up when anyone is coming to his house." He went on to tell about how he liked to have things spic and span for inspectors. He knew Mr. Lewis. He was raised up with Mr. Jackson, who is in charge of the State Vocational work. One time a Federal man gave Mr. Crane a low rating. At the meeting at Baton Rouge these ratings were announced, and the question was asked if everyone was satisfied with their ratings, to stand up. Everybody stood up but Mr. Crane. He told Mr. Jackson he wasn't satisfied with the ratings for him, that it was unfair and dishonest. Mr. Sargent, the Federal Vocational Supervisor from Washington, was there. But they changed Mr. Crane's rating, and Mr. Jackson took him aside and told him that as long as he, Jackson, had that job, Mr. Crane would have his.

Mr. Crane said that everything he asked from the white folks he got. He had just asked them for three new toilets, and they gave it to them.

I said to Mr. Crane, "These are mighty nice white folks around here, aren't they?"

And Mr. Crane said, "Yes. Man and boy, I was raised up around here, and coming and going I haint never had no trouble with none of 'em. They always treats me as nice and polite as they can. *As long as you know your place*, they treat you fine. Why, I ain't never had no criticism except from among my own race. My race is alright, but they can't do anything for you. When they wanted that extra room, one of the teachers said that she'd give five dollars; I didn't say nothing, but I got up afterward and told them that they didn't have the money to do that. So they didn't. Then they had a meeting one Sunday afternoon, and I had Mr. Bateman out to it, and he give us this extra room, just like that. Now, I'm worked to death doing things for people. I've terraced 1728 acres this year. I had so much to do that I told Mr. Stringfield I couldn't do everything that was asked of me. Of course, there's the school board members. They asks you to do things, and it's right that you should do it. They give you your job. The other night I was got up at 2 o'clock in the morning to doctor on one of the school board member's horses. He was nigh dying, but I just doctored on im with home remedies and reading out of books and I cured him."

"Mr. Crane," I said, "how come all these white and colored folks have the same name, like Bickham, and Magee, and the like? Does it go back to slavery days?"

(It will be remembered that Ernest had been very reluctant to mention this relationship, and that he had never said that he, himself, was related to Mr. Tommie Graves, while saying that his mother was his daughter.)

"Later than that," said Mr. Crane, smiling. "You know, Professor, I says that some day there won't be another black man left in this country."

"I thought," I interrupted, "that kind of thing was just in the olden days."

"It's going on right now, professor." (Ernest had said there wasn't anything like this going on now.) "Why, there's a trustee of the school in Franklinton, John Taylor, and two daughter's of hisn' had white babies in the last three months. It started with one of 'em cookin' for

a white man, and now he's jus a keepin' her. John Taylor says that he can't control his daughters, but the scriptures say that a man should rule in his own house before he exercises dominion over other folks.

"Why, my father when he died had eighteen children, and sixteen of em are living now. He died leaving 175 acres of land. He entered, homesteaded, on 104 acres, and bought the rest. When he died, he didn't owe a cent. That's mighty rare, Professor, for a man to die not owing anybody. And all of his children have bought homes of their own.

"My father's father was a white man. There's a whole passel of white Cranes on the other side of town. Professor, folks is getting more and more immoral, all the time. There's as much of that goin on now as there ever was.

"I was wondering," I said, "about the Burrisses in town. Are they any kin?"

"They sure are" said Mr. Crane. "You take John Burris that runs the store, and George Burris works there, and his son, they's half brothers. And they really looks out for 'em. They won't let nobody say anything about George Burris."[12]

(Evidently Professor Crane is a strictly marginal man, living by virtue of his acquaintance with the white folks, by his relationship with them, by the protection they give him, by their patronage. He is "frank," but in the sense of not seeing any lack of virtue in confession, in recognizing that the white folks have made him what he is and are responsible for his well being. Perhaps Ernest's failure to talk as readily about his white kin was due to the fact that he had not profited so directly from his white relations, but was obliged to wring his living from the soil.)

"Saturday night," said Professor Crane, "a white man stobbed a colored man to death in Bogalusa over a colored woman."

In the afternoon I attended a football game between Plaquemine and Franklinton colored schools. Mr. Barker sent us complimentary tickets. The Franklinton team was well coached and put up a good game. The Plaquemine team had decided not to come the night before, and had telephoned; but had been persuaded to come after it was decided by Franklinton to lend them football togs, which they lacked.

The Plaquemine team came in assorted uniforms, some overalls, some plain pants, some the Franklinton cast off togs, which in turn were cast off to the Negroes by the white high school. About fifty whites were present at the beginning of the game, including the brass band from the white school which played marches as the colored football team and rooting section marched in. The Franklinton football team was led in at a run by Miss Burris, Miss Washington Parish Training School, a daughter of the local Burisses, dressed in a yellow football sweater with a blue skirt. I noticed the young white boys critically eyeing the colored girls as they passed them, and the colored girls looking coy. There were a number of white girls in the brass band. All of the colored boys appeared to be on the football squad.

The game was very ragged, the Plaquemine team offering little opposition to the Franklinton team. Most of the white folks left at the end of the first half. As the game started, one of the Plaquemine boys took off his shoes and hurled them to the sidelines. He played the balance of the game barefoot. The boy in overalls was Plaquemine's best player, making innumerable tackles, and viciously.

Mr. Bateman, the superintendent, and others, were out. When Stringfield came, he said, "Barker, Mr. Bateman said for you to come and get him." Principal Barker said, "Yes sir," and left the field to drive after Mr. Bateman. When Mr. Bateman got ready to go, he said, "Barker, take me home." And Barker did.[13]

(I believe that Mrs. Barker takes out Mr. Bateman's washing. One day I picked up the little Barker boy, who said he was going after the clothes. I let him out at Mr. Bateman's house. Or perhaps Mrs. Barker supervises the girls at the training school who take out the washing.)

At the game was Mr. John Taylor, the trustee of the training school, whom, Mr. Crane assured me, had been presented by his daughters within the last three months with two mulatto babies by white men.

November 17, 1934.

Arose at 6:30—bright sunshine. Walked over toward Eulis Warren for eggs. Met Mr. Monroe leading his mules, going toward syrup mill.

Talked. It seems that one man out this way has deserted his wife and four chillun, and they hain't heerd from him since he left about the first of the year. They don't know where he is.

Some folks suspect that he runned away to take up with Linkton Magee's wife, who lives on the next farm. She had a father mighty low over by Picayune, and they wrote for her to come over. She went and staid about a week, and then come back. Then she went back, they writing to her, and she ain't come back yet. Last time they heard from her, she was in Florida.

Mr. Bennie Graves runs the syrup mill. Old Mr. Tommie Graves is a mighty fine man. He's paralyzed, but he gets around in his little cart, he even goes into the woods looking for his cattle. Mr. Tommie is a mighty fine man. Mr. Monroe's brother was in the penitentiary, and they paid several folks to get him out, but none of em did. Mr. Tommie went and got him out, and it didn't cost 'em nothing.

Murdis Magee is the son of a man who was Albert Magee's (white) father. He had lots of land (Murdis's father) and three or four hundred head of sheep. He raised his own stock. There was just two boys, Murdis's father and Murdis's Uncle. Murdis's Uncle was a drunkard, his father a Christian. Murdis Magee's uncle is still living. And fight! He'd fight you for anything, and anybody.[14]

Miss Hynaneatha is Murdis's sister.

Mr. Monroe's wife was half-sister to Mr. Willie Crane's father.

Mr. Monroe is half-brother to Mr. Silas, who lives in Hattiesburg now. Mr. Boy Bickham is half-brother to Mr. Silas. Miz Gabe's mother and Miss Hynaneatha's mother (also Murdis's mother) were full sisters. Both must have been intelligent women. Miz Gabe is very intelligent. Miss Hynaneatha has been to Tuskegee, and Mr. Murdis is Federal Agricultural agent.

Mr. Monroe says he raised Luther Graves' father.

The syrup mill is running full blast, but they won't get around to Mr. Monroe's cane until next week. Mr. Monroe calls Bennie Graves "Bennie" before the white men, in the same manner as when he was calling around to see the other folks.

Went to Franklinton to attend meeting of teachers in Parish. They were concerned first with the election of officers for a parish teachers association. Mr. Barker totally incompetent as acting chairman. Miss Todd prompted him and the assembly. My observation of the community meeting at Star Creek suggests that the Star Creek community conducted their business much more speedily and intelligently than the teachers. The fellow Magee at Blackjack was the most intelligent man there, excepting, perhaps, a young fellow named Johnson who teaches at the Parish training school. Amacker, at Bethel, was pretty intelligent, also a young man.

Stringfield and another white visitor, Weakley, principal at the Mount Hermon School, came in just as they were beginning to discuss the teachers association and representation there. The Negroes wanted permission to get off with pay for the teachers association. They talked around the subject, toyed with it, joking Mr. Stringfield, an elaborate ritual, without asking him directly. It seemed to be a regular pattern of how to get things. I notice that they all refer to each other as Mister and Mrs. before the white people, with no self consciousness.

I was called on to speak, and spoke too long, nine minutes, about nothing. My speech was confused, an illustration of my own confusion. It was not highly appreciated by the teachers. I spoke of how lovely the people at Star Creek were. I don't think the teachers got the point at all.

Mr. Crane was there. After the meeting, he told me that Mr. Weakley was a fine man. Weakley went out with Stringfield without either speaking to me. Weakley came back and told me he wanted to meet me. In his speech to the teachers he had told them the old story of Booker T. Washington and the fact that no Tuskegee student or graduate had ever been indicted (????). The Negroes applauded this statement, again in the pattern.

Weakley told me—it was not a conversation—that he had lived in Louisiana 26 years. He was from Tennessee, Clarksville. He never had been able to understand how they treated Negroes in Louisiana. "Why, in Tennessee they voted all over the State, just like white folks,"

and he believed they paid the same salaries in the schools (a mistaken belief). "Why, once at Clarksville, a colored boy was working for a white man, and he grabbed the man's wife by the arm. Why, anywhere else they would'a lynched him. But they just called in the doctor and the sheriff, and the doctor said he was crazy, and they sent him on to the asylum, and that's all there was to it. I'm just telling that to show how things are in Clarksville.

"Why, there are wealthy men of your race in Clarksville. There was one man owned nearly two blocks of city property. There never has been a lynching in Montgomery county."

November 18, 1934 (Sunday).

Services were at Jerusalem. Reverend Hawthorne of Hattiesburg preached. Sunday school was not at Star Creek today, but at the church.

Miz Gabe went to church. Neither Mr. Monroe nor Mr. Ernest went. Mr. Monroe has not been to church or to Sunday school that I knows of since we been here.

Mr. Monroe had the picture of a woman which he showed me. She was a large woman with white stockings. Fletcher Bickham was with him. He said to me, "Perfesser, How you like them legs?" I said nothing. Mr. Monroe said, "Her legs is powerful too big, don't you think, perfesser?" I laughed, and he did too.

November 19, 1934.

Ernest, Monroe, and Orsell left at 3 o'clock in the morning in my car to go to Bogalusa to see King Gulley, whose band is to furnish music for the Fair. I told them to be back by noon as I was expecting Mr. Lewis.

In my overalls I walked over to the school. Mr. Crane was just arriving. It was ten o'clock, and he was overdue. A class of children was waiting for him in the newly arranged school house. The yard had been freshly swept. I also understand that a call was sent out to all of the boys of older age to come to school this week. Carl, Mr. Bickham's boy, whose father give him away when didn't nobuddy think he'd live,

and who Miz Bickham has raised almost 'til he's a man, is in school this week. (Carl is in the 4th grade, and is in love with Willie Pearl.)

Mr. Crane, explaining his lateness, said that he had vaccinated 65 hogs for cholera this morning. They were white folks hogs, many of them belonging to Mr. Fletcher Smith. He'd have to tell Mr. Stringfield that he had to give up his terracing work, he had so much work to do tending animals. The white folks is what made it possible for him to get a salary, and he was going to help them. Our race don't do no good for you, and they cain't.

Mr. Crane said "I see you're in your overalls. White folks takes to that." (I started to tell him that I wore the overalls because they seemed the most appropriate garb for a country in which everyone wears overalls, but decided not to.) He said, "Mr. Stringfield says you're a mighty fine young man." I thought this was bait, and so I said nothing.

(Ernest told me afterward that Mr. Crane said to him, "Do you know what perfesser's real business is?" and "It's got me right puzzled." Ernest said he didn't tell him nuthin. When Ernest told me this, expectantly, I just laughed.)

At Franklinton, where I went, in the afternoon, all newspapers were sold out. One of the young white men at the filling station, on inquiry, walked to his house three blocks distant and brought me his copy of the *Picayune*, which he gave to me.

The mail man came as I was at the school. An old woman ran up with one of these blue pension blanks. She asked me, as she waited for the mail rider to make out a money order, if it was right that she was to get $30 a month as soon as she sent it in.

I said, "No, that just is an association that's trying to get that to pass, it ain't passed yet," but she said, "It says so right here," and she pointed to her blank, to the line where it referred to the kind of bill the Association was trying to pass. She paid no more attention to me and walked on to the mailrider, who proceeded to make out her money order.

Miz Lu and Willie Pearl had come to the house Saturday night, Miz Lu with one of the blanks. I advised her against doing it. Mr. Bickham

was wondering why he hadn't got a blank. I think I persuaded Miz Lu not to send in her dollar. I wondered if I should have.

In the evening J.R., the Widow Graves' young son with a club foot, came up with two tickets for Henrietta for the "Most Populous girl." We bought them. Then we asked J.R. to stay for dinner. He did, and ate heartily, although it appeared later that he had already eaten and had slipped away. Mrs. Graves was down at the surrup mill, helping Mr. Bickham cook syrup at Ernest Warren's mill (white). Soon Henrietta, Oletha, and Marshall, his sisters and brother, came up, looking for J.R. While Julia and Henrietta washed the dishes, Marshall, Oletha, J.R., and myself sat in stony silence in the dining room. Julia suggested riddles. Oletha knew numbers of them. J.R. tried to say some, but he always got mixed up. Then they began to tell stories. They were familiar nursery stories, Lil Red Ridin Hood, Babes in the Woods, etc., but they were told with new diction. They also knew several Brer Rabbitt stories. It appears that Miss Dyson, the teacher, has taught them.

Oletha is black, J.R. is chocolate, Marshall brown with sandy, nappy hair, J.R. with wiry black hair, Henrietta brown with curly brown hair with a glint of bronze. She would be an extremely attractive girl if ever she was clothed and cleaned up just once, and Julia wishes to do it, but I advise against it. Miz Gabe has said, "Willie Pearl's a nice girl, she don't run round like Henrietta."

Oletha is very aggressive. She tells stories beautifully.

Although J.R. (club footed) could never get his stories right, the other children always let him finish. They didn't tease him when he stumbled, although they all knew it. They seemed very good natured together.

As they left, Oletha burst into a "bad" rhyme which she shouted. It was pure deviltry.

A heavy rain come up about nine o'clock. I stayed up late to read, and the kitchen leaks like a sieve.

At the threat of rain in the afternoon, Mr. Ernest harnessed the mules up to the wagon and began to haul in cane shucks from the field. He is through shucking and topping, but neither he nor Mr. Monroe can get

their syrup ground until the "big folks" get through. The big folks, it appears, are the white owners. There are two mills in the neighborhood, Mr. Bennie Graves and Ernest Warren's. The Graves mill is powered by a tractor, and has a capacity of 150 or so gallons a day. The Warren mill is a press mule-drawn, with a capacity of only about 50 gallons a day. Mr. Bickham cooks at the Warren mill, Mr. Bennie at his own. In the first conversation I had with Mr. Monroe, he says that Bennie will grind when whoever gets there first. But it really appears that he grinds for the big men first, the men who have from 150 to four hundred gallons of syrup to make. Mr. King has a mill, but he mostly makes for hisself and for his tenants.

November 20, 1934.

Got up, went to school. Still raining. Breakfast cooked in shower in kitchen. Went by Miz Lu's house and got a quart of buttermilk, also a mess of greens. Mr. Crane told me yesterday that he was planning to cut down three oaks in the yard. They made the sheds rot, and they shaded the garden. Neither the garden nor the sheds seem to me to be worth the sacrifice of these oaks, which lend good shade to the yard and add a little of beauty to the grounds. But there does not appear to be in the minds of these people any idea of trees as aesthetic objects. I asked Miss Lu about the trees, and when I saw that it was her idea to cut them down, I desisted.

Going home, I saw Uncle Wade Callahan, he says his name is, but Mr. Monroe says that they jus call him Brumfield. I invited him up to the house. On the way he told me he was looking for Mr. Ranse, because he intended to do some work for him. Mr. Ranse was out by my house, so I told him to come up and wait there, and to sit and talk. Going up the hill we met Mr. Ranse, who was with Fletcher Bickham and Ernest. Mr. Ranse came on down the hill and began to talk to Uncle Wade about work. They were bargaining for the services of Uncle Wade and his wife.

Uncle Wade is an old man. He has two teeth in the front of his mouth, and they project from the receded gums like two denuded gateposts. His hair is peppercorn, and white, and the skin of his skull shows

browner above the chocolate black of his face. His eyes are quite brown and bright. He walks with a cane. He asked me, "How old does you think I am?" I inspected him with great dubiousness, seeking to imply that I thought him very young. With great satisfaction, Uncle Wade said, "You wouldn't think I was between seventy and eighty, now would you?" "I sure never would of thought it!"

Mr. Ranse asked him what he'd work for. Well, he'd worked for Bickham, he and his wife, for a gallon and a half of syrup and dinner, a day. (Labor is hired and paid for on such an arrangement. The other day Ernest was complaining that he'd offered two gallons of syrup and dinner for help, but the fellers had rather work over at Bennie's syrup mill for a gallon and a half of syrup a day, and they had to furnish their own eatings. But he guessed the fellers was lookin' at workin a long time at the syrup mill, whereas he would only give em work for a day or so.)

Uncle Wade told Mr. Ranse that he didn't want to work for no syrup, he and his wife had already got twelve gallon of syrup, and that was enough to do for them. He wanted to work for something else. I saw that my presence was interfering with bargaining, and so I walked on.

At the house, I gave Ernest the key to the car. The committee had tentatively come to an arrangement with Mr. Greenlaw by which he was to sell them a second-handed Delco light plant for $60, $30 down and $30 to be paid next harvest time. Now, Mr. Greenlaw wants to change the notes, so that they agree to pay $20 down and $8.00 a month until all is paid. The committee members think this a great injustice, because us farmer folks, we cain't pay like that, we've got to pay when we's got money, and that's jus in the time after layin' by time.

Along came Uncle Wade after the others left. He done made his rangement with Mr. Ranse. (Uncle Wade proves to be a very unreliable witness about rates of pay, either an awful liar or just "weak in de head" as Mr. Monroe said he was.) He said he worked for Mr. Jim King and Mr. King he paid from $1.50 to $2.00 a day. I believe that he must be using "gallons of syrup" interchangeably with "dollars."

Uncle Wade tells me that he's got a "nice wife, she's honest, she's clean, she's hard workin, and she don't never do no wrong. We been

married thirty years, and we ain't never had no trouble. We ain't never been parted. My wife, I don't ask her to work. I jus say, 'If you ain't got nuthin to do, you can come along with me, if you can.' She likes to work. We stripped cane for Bickham, and I worked for Mr. Jim King. He's a fine man. He always pays you like he says he will. Now, all folks ain't like dat.

"I strips cane as good as any of em. Some folks uses a knife, but I (looking at his hands) I jus strips it wif my natal hand. Cose, it hurts some, and it burns some, w'en you strips with yo hands, but if you takes and rubs some kerosene on em w'en youse thru, hit don't hurt at all. It burns some in the pan of yo han (indicating palm), but jus rub kerosene, and hit's allright.

"Yessir, I got a good wife. She's honest, she's clean, she's hard-workin, and she works right along wid me. We hain't never been parted but once, and been married thirty year. Dat time, I was wukkin in Columbia, up in Marion county. I wukked up dere for ten, fifteen years. I done good up dere. I used to wuk fo the City of Marion."

"What did you do, Uncle Wade?"

"I'd mow lawns, and I'd cut wood, and I'd do mos anything. I usedter make two and three dollars a day. Then I followed Mr. Brown down near Bogaluse, wid a saw mill. He was a nice man, but he didn' pay his debts. He had a nice wife, a mighty nice woman, and he'd skip behin her to keep fum payin his debts. She had a powerful lot of money. She would tell him, 'Now, Mr. Brown, you ought to treat everybody right, and pay yo debts.' She was a little woman, a spare made woman, but she sure could tell Mr. Brown what to do."

"While we was livin in Columbia, I went to town to get some grocery. I got the grocery, but I didn' go home wid it. I jus fooled around.

"Me and my wife been married thirty year, and we hain't never been separated, cepn one time, and I was de cause of dat. Yessir, *I* was the cause of *that*. We was livin over in Columbia. I went to town to buy de grocery, and I didn't come back. I just fooled around all day, going fum one woman to another. I come home, and my wife, she met me at the door, and she didn' see no grocery. She said, 'Where my grocery?' And I 'menced to look up. And she say, 'You had plenty time to

look down; no use lookin' up now. You migha bought my grocery first and then gone back to yo' madam.'

"Then she said, 'Go get yo hat.' That's all she said. 'Go get yo hat.' An I looked at her, and I didn't believe she meant it. But she did.

"Then my nephew spoke up. He's a man like dis. He don't stand fo' nuthin fum nobody. He runs a pressin shop in Columbia for w'ite and black, and he mighty well off. He real independent. He my sister's boy. His daddy R. Warren, and R. Warren thinks a whole lot of that boy. You know R. Warren, what got the big store at Hackley. My nephew bout your color.

"'Well,' my nephew said, 'Don't you go nowhere, Uncle Wade. Even if you has gone around with some wimmin, you hain't done no more than any other man'd do.'

"Well, things went on. My wife wouldn't talk to me, she wouldn't say nuthin, things was real aggravated. So, on a Saturday I went down to de station, and I got a dray, and I sent it atter my trunk. My wife weren't nowhere to be seen. I sat down in de train, it left Columbia at 1 o'clock, and, I couldn't he'p myself, the tears just come a-runnin down my cheeks, and I jus cried.

"Bout a month later, my brother, Dave, he said, h'aint no use you folks actin like dat. You jus sen her de money and tell her to come on down here. And I did, an we been livin here every since."

Toward the afternoon I walked down to the syrup mill with Mr. Monroe. He told me that Uncle Wade was an old wastrel who had thrown away all of his money when he was young, and now he had to work hard, he and his wife, and they had to stay on Uncle Dave's place, Uncle Wade's half brother. Uncle Dave owns a pretty large place, is a trustee of the school, and a deacon of Jerusalem Church.

On the way to the syrup mill we passed near the Warren house, and near the crossing where Mr. Sam Warren, father of R. Warren, was run over in his buggy by the train. Again Mr. Monroe told me the story. "Perfesser, I really don' believe that old man was in his right mind, or he intended to get kilt. The buggy jus got on top of the

crossin and stopped. The train blowed and blowed, but the buggy didn't budge, and old man Warren he didn' try to git out.

"He had jus come from seein a young white woman he was runnin after, lived in the house Mr. Travis lives in now. I expects some other younger man was cuttin him out, and he mus have felt mighty bad about it."

Said I, "Mr. Monroe, was the woman married?"

"Yes," he answered, "but she was separated from her husband. Afore Mr. Sam started runnin around with her, another old man, Mr. Haley's wife's father, Mr. Haley what own the big store at Clifton, he runned around with her, and he kilt hisself."

Said I, "She was death, wasn't she?"

"Yessir," he answered. "After Mr. Sam got kilt, she went off from here with another man, and I hear she's livin down in Bogalusa way now."

At the syrup mill we found Mr. Bickham cooking the syrup. The Widow Graves was helping. A white man, a young man, Ernest Warren, who owns the mill, was sitting by on a log. Andrew Brown was feeding the mill, which was drawn by two mules which are worked with another team in two hour shifts.

The Warren boy's wife sat out in the backyard about fifty yards distance, in a bonnet and gingham dress, nursing a baby. A little boy about three or four years old was playing around the yard. Mr. Monroe and Mr. Bickham called the white boy "Ernie."

I asked what they did with the skimming, which they were careful to take up and save in a barrel. Everyone laughed. It was good for beer, and, added the Warren boy, it was good hog food.

Mr. Monroe and Mr. Boy Bickham began to tease the Warren boy about his little child, which he was now holding up.

"Ernie, do you think you can raise that boy right?" said Mr. Monroe.

"I'm raisin him jus like my daddy raised me," replied Ernest.

"Hits a pity," said Mr. Bickham, "what triflin' boys some good men has. Now yore daddy, he was a mighty good man."

Mr. Monroe joined in. "Yes, if that boy takes after his grand-daddy, he'll be a mighty nice little fellow."

Ernest took the teasing in good spirit. "Well, I don't know how it is with the colored section, but I've known some white preachers had children as bad as any you could find, anywhere. I've been out with preacher's daughters could drink as much whiskey as I could."

"Do tell," said Mr. Bickham.

While we were walking back from the syrup mill, Mr. Monroe told me that R. Warren's daughter had turned out awful bad. She was married, but she run off with a preacher. At least, she didn' exactly run off with him, him going to New Orleans and she following after him soon after. They was livin together down there now, he heeard.

He (Mr. Monroe) got in a fight with that Warren boy's daddy once what owned the syrup mill. It happened like this. He had been working hard for old man Sam, and the boy, he wasn't doing nuthin. "We wuz both boys, I was jus nigh grown. He wanted me to go huntin' with him. I told him I was too tired. He said he was goin to make me. He jumped me. It was right in old Man Sam's house, and when he heeard the scufflin, he come in and cussed his son out. He knowed what I had did that day."

(When we went down to the syrup mill, the Warren boy was sitting there whittling, watching Mr. Bickham and Aunt George cook. The Warren boy had on boots. Mr. Monroe said to him, "I'll rassle you for them boots." The Warren boy got up and said, "Come on, I'll throw you." Mr. Monroe was only joking. He had told me the same thing the other day, when I was wearing my boots.)

Said I, "My father was a preacher!"

They didn't know whether to take it as a joke, as I had intended, or not.

Then Mr. Monroe turned to talking about what a good man Ernest's papa was.

Willie, the hired boy who was helping Mrs. Graves strain syrup through a cloth some little distance away, whispered to her, "Yeah, and if that little boy turns out like old man Sam he'll be a bobcat, too."

Mr. Monroe walked over to the yard and talked some to Mrs. Warren. He had a long private conversation with Andrew Brown.

Coming back, Mr. Monroe said, "That white lady said to me, 'I see you got that great man with you. I hear he's a mighty nice man.'"

We were passing near Andrew Brown's house. The little children playing around had always attracted our attention. One is a very pretty little black girl. They are reputed to have beautiful voices thru the neighborhood.

I said to Mr. Monroe, "Mr. Brown sure has got a lot of lil' uns."

Mr. Monroe said, "They ain't his. They's his daughters."

I asked him, "Whose their daddy?"

He said, "Four or five different men."

I said, "Who were they?"

He said, "I really don't know."

As we passed the house, Mr. Brown's daughter was standing out. She looked like she was pregnant again. Mr. Monroe spoke to her in the manner of a man who would have said more had I not been there. As we had left the lot where they were making syrup, Mr. Brown had yelled to him, "If a rain comes up, *you* could stop by the house, if the perfesser wasn't with you," and laughed. I am wondering if Mr. Monroe hasn't been having something to do with Mr. Brown's daughter, him being a widower for almost two years.

November 21, 1934.

Raining hard all night and this morning, and all day. Mr. Bickham killed hogs, three, today. Mr. Ernest brought us a piece of liver. I went over to the school. Mr. Crane wasn't there, neither was Miss Hynaneatha (Mrs. Vick). She had sent word she was sick. Mrs. Dyson was teaching her class. There were only 15 children present out of an enrollment of more than 100. Mrs. Vick had also been "sick" the day before. It was a rough day and she lives about a mile from the school. It appears that these absences from school on the part of the teachers are not uncommon. Mrs. Dyson and Sibley are a little more faithful to their duties, probably because they do not have the security that is assured Mrs. Vick and Crane. Crane is the white folks friend, and has

white relatives, works for the white folks, and has powerful colored relatives, the Crane family being one of the best off in the parish. Mrs. Vick is the sister of Murdis Magee, the Demonstration agent, and probably has other attachments in and about concerning which I have not yet learned. She is separated from her husband, but they were together during the fair, he teaching in Mississippi.

The widow Graves, Aunt George, helped Mr. Bickham kill hogs today. All of her children were there, too. J.R. was out, as he frequently is. Miz Gabe says the Graves chillun is hard to learn. They ought to be with their frequent absences.

In the school I listened to Mrs. Dyson hear a class in reading in the third grade. None of the children could read, with the exception of a little girl named "Gradure-Lee" (probably for "Gradually"?) Barker. (Was she born "Gradually"?)

The Barker child is the daughter of the Secretary of the Community Association. Evidently her superior reading is due to the family superiority in culture.

In the afternoon, Olee (it is Olee, not Oletha), Henrietta, and Willie Pearl and J.R. came up to the house. Henrietta wore a dress with puffed sleeves (is this one of the rewards of her "running round" in contrast to Willie Pearl's being a nice girl?). Mr. Bickham came up with a piece of meat for us. I notice the children treat him with great familiarity. I said to J.R., "you should have been in school today." Mr. Bickham said, "He wasn't holpin none, he was jus in the way. Aunt George ought to be whipped for that." He said, "J.R., you oughta been in school today," and kicked the boy's club foot significantly. This brutality apparently was apparent only to Julia and myself, certainly not to the good old Uncle Boy. We wondered if the familiarity of the girls with Mr. Bickham was due to their own individual forwardness, or to a general custom of the country.

November 22, 1934.

It "faired off" last night, and the weather turned colder. Mr. Ernest yelled for us to come down, about 7 o'clock, that he was going to

knock one. We went down. Miz Gabe's sister and nephew were there to help. Ernest was trying to shoot the pig with a .32, but missed several shots. He blamed the gun, but I thought he was nervous. Mr. Monroe was disgusted with this slow business, and took an axe to the pig, after which he stobbed it. Another pig was killed soon afterward. There was a fire with two kettles, and a barrel, half sunk into the ground. After dousing the pigs in the barrel, the little one was hung up and Mr. Monroe butchered it while Ernest and his nephew were still cleaning the hair off the big one. Mr. Monroe was very proud over his skill. . . .

Julia went over to Mrs. Bickham's, to get the meat chopper. Mrs. Bickham was rendering the lard. Mr. Bickham had gone back to work on the syrup mill.

The women cleaned the guts, the men cutting the meat up.

While gutting the pig, Mr. Monroe severed a gut. The excrement popped out. "You musta left this pig in the field las' night," said Odell. Miz Gabe produced a string and neatly sutured this opening, later washing off the filth.

Mr. Monroe neatly carried out the work of butchering the hog. Julia said, "It's just like an operation." Apparently no one had ever thought of it in that light. They entered into the idea with great zest. As the larger hog was swung up to a table—he was too big to hand—Ernest said, "Let's put him on the operating table." Odell, Miz Gabe's nephew, said, "He's got an appendix."

Miz Fannie, Miz Gabe's sister, calls Odell her baby. Apparently a grown man, he is to go back to school after the Fair.

While fixing sausage in the kitchen—the guts are cleaned and sticks are pushed through them to turn them inside out, long rods—a conversation came up in the kitchen.

Miz Gabe said, "I didn' know Ermitrude had herself in that shape."

Miz Fannie said, "I knowed it as soon as I sawed her. She came in the house and I gave her some chicken and she et it and she said, 'this chicken sho is good to me.' And I said, 'I guess it is good to you.' And she said, 'Now you're tryin' to start up somethin.'"

Miz Gabe laughed. "No you wasn't. It was already started up, wasn't it? Wonder why they try to keep people from knowin' it? I don't see no reason to keep people from knowin it, especially if you's married."

While they were cleaning the guts, Miz Gabe said, "Those sanctified people tickle me singing that song, 'This thing's gettin better every day.'"

Miz Gabe and Miz Fannie started singing, as they pushed the sticks thru the guts,

"This thing's gettin' better every day
This thing's gettin better every day—"

Then a gut burst, and Miz Gabe said, "*This* thing ain't gettin' no better!" Both laughed merrily.

Mr. Monroe came in fussing. Ernest had gone to town with Horace, and Mr. Monroe wanted to go over to the syrup mill.

Mr. Monroe said, "This ain't none of my work. (He was out in the yard cooking the lard.) I don't generally do this. Gabe ought to be doin' this. I don't want to be out here all the evenin'."

Miz Gabe said, "I don't want to be in this kitchen all the evenin', either. I haven't got but two hands, have I?"

Mr. Monroe came in again and said, "Gabe, I want a bucket and a cloth, and something to dip the lard with."

Miz Gabe said, "Go git 'em, Mr. Monroe. You know where they is."

Mr. Monroe said, "Gabe, you know I don't know where nothing is."

He got the bucket, and went on out. Odell came back in, and Miz Gabe told Julia where to get a cloth.

Then Miz Gabe started fussing about Mr. Monroe. "You know he sho is a lot of trouble. Uncle Boy ain't half the trouble he is."

Said Julia, "Maybe his wife spoiled him."

"No," said Miz Gabe, "he's been used to working, his wife taught him how to work. He needs a wife to look after him. He ought to have that woman with them big fat legs laid out amongst these sausages."

(A notable fact is the reliance that all put on Miz Gabe and her intelligence. With the meat chopper, for example, Mr. Ernest put it together

wrong, with the meat screw backward. Miz Gabe had to take it to pieces, wash it, and put it back together right.)

Just before going to town, we went down to Miz Gabe's with the garbage. Julia went in front. As she went up the backsteps, she looked through the kitchen door and there was a white man sitting down across the table from Mr. Monroe, eating some of the newly prepared pork with gusto. He was very taken aback, apparently, to see us. Miz Gabe invited us to come in and eat, but I declined. I first thought it was Mr. Monroe's mulatto boy, but it wasn't. It was a white man from Bogalusa who was trying to sell a Delco light system to the community.

As Ernest and I drove away, he said, "Perfesser, it's funny the way these white folks carry on, and yet, when they comes amongst you, they're just as nice as they can be. Now that feller was jus as nice as he could be."

I asked him, if the man wasn't doing that just because he was away from other white people. His answer did not satisfy me.

"Oh, no. Now, you take Mr. Jim King. He's one of the best-off men there is in this Parish, and he'll come around, and if he's hungry, he'll sit down and eat with us jus like one of the family."

After I had gone, Julia was in the yard turning the sausage grinder. Mr. Monroe and the white man came out. The meat grinder was not grinding well. Miz Gabe said, "Miss Julia, you can't manage that, can you?" Julia answered, "I think the meat's too fat." Mr. Monroe said, "No, it just ain't put up right, but I don't know nothin' about it. Gabe generally does that." The white man chimed in and said something about the grinder not being put up right. He wouldn't agree with Julia. I and (she) have noticed that this is typically true, that white people refuse to agree with you even on minor points like this, from what appears to be a sheer unwillingness to accept the fact that a nigger might be right in an explanation.

But the operation of the grinder did show that it was the meat, and it was very obvious that fat was the cause of its faulty operation.

The white man said, "Maybe it is the meat. You try it, Granddad—" (addressing Mr. Monroe). Julia then walked into the house.

Miz Gabe said, volunteering the information without being asked, "I just sat him down to the table just like he was anybody else, because I didn' have no time to fix no extra place for him. And he ate like he enjoyed it, too."

I went on to town and got some groceries. I am now called Bond by the postmaster, Mr. Greenlaw, the salesman in Burris' store, and the drugstore salesman.

I went out to the school to see Mr. Barker. Mr. Barker congratulated me on my speech to the teachers. He told me that it had so inspired the Superintendent that he had come out again Monday and talked to the teachers about morals. (I didn't see the connection, and I thought Mr. Barker was kidding me, but Mr. Barker's life is founded on kidding people, so I didn't mind it.) He also told me that my visit had resulted in getting new locks for the doors. I see Mr. Dyson putting new locks in on the doors at Star Creek, so perhaps my visit was also responsible for that, too. It appears, so says Mr. Barker, that during the time when I was on my feet, the door blew open behind me, and Mr. Stringfield closed it with his foot. After the meeting, said Mr. Barker, he told Mr. Stringfield, "I hated to see you embarrassed before the visitors, having to close that door with your foot after it blew open." And he told Mr. Stringfield what a wonderful evidence of good relations between the races I had thought the turning out of the white band for the colored football game was. Mr. Stringfield just beamed, said Mr. Barker. Right after that, said Barker, Mr. Stringfield said he was going to send over some new locks.

"That's the way you have to get things," said Mr. Barker, "from these white people."

At the filling station, there is a division of labor for servicing my car, when I drive up. Mr. Bickham puts in the gas and even the water, but he calls the colored attendant to check my tires. Never will he stoop so low.

November 23, 1934.

Drove to Baton Rouge. The Delco lights were brought up before we left and installed. The Fair Association was much disappointed when Mr. Greenlaw changed the original terms of sale, which had been that they pay $75, $30 down and the rest payable next harvest time. The members of the community did not want to sign a note for monthly payments, to which Mr. Greenlaw changed the arrangement. Hence the presence of the salesman from Bogalusa. The final arrangement was that there should be paid the sum of $50, $25 down, and $25 borrowed from the bank, a note being signed by the members of the community. It now seems that all the dickering was just that, that both Mr. Greenlaw and the members of the community association knew perfectly well that they intended to get the lights from him.

In Baton Rouge in the afternoon, went to Dr. Felton Brown's office. He insisted we go to his house to stay. We did so, gladly. His wife is a Creole, beautiful. He has a little yellow-haired girl of about two, Joan, who is just learning to talk. She has very fine toys, and is a very intelligent child.

At the teacher's association, saw the Symonds. Felton Clark[15] joked with us outside to the effect that the Association was called a Negro association, but that the entire day had been taken up by calling upon second rate white superintendents to speak. At the invitation of Miss Fannie Williams,[16] I addressed the Parent-Teachers Association briefly on the subject of my Aaron Douglas quilt.

November 24, 1934.

At Southern University, where the last session of the Teachers Association was held. In an open forum on vocational education, at which Felton Clark presided, one lady said with great vigor that she wanted to go home and "do something intangible."

After leaving the Association, we came back to town and dined with the Browns, very satisfyingly. Then on to Natchez. Stopped off at Afton Villa, which is an ante-bellum home so placarded from a highway sign. The owner of the house stepped out as we drove in. The trees, now beautiful, were planted in 1849 when the house was built. The

master of the house charged us 0.25 apiece, and conducted us through the house and yards. He was politeness itself. In one of the parlors sat an old woman, a sort of malicious sprite. The owner was telling us of the mistress of the mansion, who sang beautifully. She corrected him with a tinkling, amused laugh—a very devilish, malicious laugh—"That was her daughter, not her." This was the only notice she took of our presence. She was thin, and a perfect picture of decayed, neat gentility.

At Natchez we discovered that Allison and Liddie had gone to Alcorn. Followed them did we. We had a flat tire at Harrison, right in front of the railroad trestle from which three Negroes were hung several years ago. Miss Althea Dumas accompanied us, and told us that the crime of the Negroes had consisted of shooting as many white men as they could before they themselves were captured. A Negro at a neighboring garage fixed the tire. The store in front of which we stopped had one side for Negroes to eat in, and another side in which whites ate. A Negro cooked for all.

Ate largely and to bed.

November 25, 1934.

Up, ate breakfast. We were staying at Mrs. Nelson's house. Mr. Nelson got his M.A. at Iowa State this past summer, in Education, I believe. He talks as though he was an illiterate. Speaking so some woman, he said that "she berthed a baby." He seems to be a good hearted fellow, though.

Inspected the campus. Found out that the new president, William Bell, was an old acquaintance, having taught with him in Oklahoma. He is young, and appears to be more intelligent than when I once knew him. From various reports I understand he got the job through the patronage of a prominent State Senator who lives in Meridian, from which Bell comes.

Inspected the library. It is frightful. I understand that some four or five thousand volumes from an older collection are stored elsewhere in the school buildings, and there are probably many valuable documents in them, considering the origin of the school. I urged the librarian (a

woman) not to throw them away. It is doubtful if she understood what I meant.

In afternoon, ate huge meal prepared by Mrs. Nelson, drove back to Natchez, stayed overnight with Allison;[17] went over to call on Dr. and Mrs. Dumas.

November 26, 1934.
Drove to Star Creek. Arrived at dusk.

November 27, 1934, Tuesday.
All is astir in preparation for fair. I went over to the syrup mill with Mr. Ernest. I drove. As I got over there, Mr. Tommie Graves, the old paralytic white man who is Mr. Ernest's grandfather, and the father of Mr. Monroe's first wife, was sitting out by the mill talking to one of his white grandsons. As I came up, he was wheeled in. Mr. Ernest yelled to the man pushing the chair, "Kin I holp you?", and, being answered affirmatively, helped him push Mr. Tommie into the house. A ramp has been constructed for his entry into the house. He has a rubber-tired cart of two-wheels which he drives all around the country.

On the way over to the mill, we passed and picked up Aunt George, who was going to carry some food she had cooked to a woman just delivered of a baby, which Mrs. Graves had delivered. We also passed J.R. and Marshall, Mrs. Graves' boys, who were riding in a two-wheeled cart much like that of Mr. Tommie, who is also their grandfather, since he is the father of Mrs. Graves' husband who deserted her several years ago.

At the mill I talked about one thing and another to one of the Graves boys and to Mr. Jake Jacobs. Mr. Jacobs was very sad over his boys, who, he said, did not take on to all of the things he tried to teach them about doctoring cattle. Why, he said, some folks claimed that there was no such disease as hollow horn, but he knew how to cure it. Why, he had a cow that had been ailing yesterday. He knew it was hollow horn and hollow tail. The cow just wouldn't get up. He got four men, and they lifted the cow plum up, but she wouldn't stand up after they lifted her. So he took a knife, and he just whittled on that cow's

horn, right down near the base, and when he had made a hole in it, he poured in some turpentine. The cow just blew stuff out of her nose—but she didn't get up. Next, he cut off her tail. He had already split her tail, and poured turpentine on it, but this time he cut it off, since the place where he had put the bandage, the bandage had come off. So he cut off her tail, and that cow, well, she just got right up from there and ran away like a house on fire. You tell me that you can't cure hollow-tail, concluded Mr. Jacobs triumphantly.

I learned also from Ernest what had happened in our absence. When I had come in, on Monday, Miz Gabe told us that there had been a little trouble, that Luther Graves had hit John, Ernest's cousin, over the head with a piece of stove wood, and that John was in a mighty bad fix.

According to Ernest, what had happened was this: "John and Luther were great friends. You couldn't see one without seeing the other. Well, on Saturday evening they were all over to Luther's place, and they were figuring on sending the electric boy, the boy what been fixing on the lights, back to town. He didn' have no way to go back to Franklinton. Well, I had gone down to Warrenton and got a bottle of beer." (Evidently whiskey, as there is plenty of cane beer around now, much closer than it would be possible to go to Warrenton for made, expensive beer.) "Luther had done told me that he wanted John to go across the creek to a frolic with him, that John had plenty of money, and after John had got two or three drinks that he'd spend all that money. But I told John not to go with him. So Luther came by my house with the electric boy, and he asked John to go with him to town, and then go cross the Creek. But John told him he'd done changed his mind. So Luther went on.

"Then John went over to Luther's store, and he was about to go home, and he bought ten cents worth of candy. Marguerite didn't have no money to change it with, and John said that he'd pay her next day, because his wife knew just how much money he'd left in his pockets with, and he'd better bring every penny home.

"He was just standin' in front of the fireplace, lookin' at the fire, when somebody come up behind him and hit him in the head with a

piece of firewood. He never knew who did it, but he knows. One of the boys there said Luther done it.

"When he came to, he run out in the yard—Marguerite had already run out (Marguerite is Luther's wife)—and Luther shot two shots of Buckshot after him.

"He ain't et nothin' for two days since then. He's mighty bad off. Luther claims that John was playin' with his wife. Now, perfesser, that ain't no way to do. He might have protected his wife. He could have taken her outside and talked to her. Now, folks won't know what to think of her, her bein' a school teacher, it's mighty bad for a man to do something like that."

(Piecing the story together from other sources, it appears that John told Luther he was going home, expecting Luther to take the electrician to Franklinton and to go from there to the dance. Apparently John thought it then a convenient way by which he could then slip back by the store. There were a number of "boys" there, but also apparently John was with Marguerite in another room, at the house, which is separate from the store. Luther, instead of going to Franklinton, doubled back to Star Creek, and caught John in the act of "playing with his wife." Whether this implies infidelity on the part of Marguerite, or whether John was bull-dozing her by taking candy without paying for it, I do not yet know. At any rate, John himself confesses it was his fault.)

Ernest continued by telling me that "Marguerite went on off to her mother's people, and Luther didn't know where she was. He didn' find out until Sunday afternoon, and then he went and got her." (Marguerite is a Burris, from Franklinton—the family which is a-kin to the white family from that town.)

November 28, 1934.

Thanksgiving Day. The fair is on. Our oil stove was borrowed for the use of the booth, which is being run by Mr. Monroe's brother-in-law. Mr. Ernest borrowed my car to bring the band from Bogalusa, King Gulley. The band consisted of a violin, a base viol, a cornet, a guitar, a banjo, and an entertainer who dances (with a chair in his mouth) and also plays a guitar, named Smokey. King Gulley plays the Viol.

The principal feature of the afternoon was a basketball game between Star Creek and Bethel. Bethel won by a large margin. Some child from Bethel hit Willie Pearl in the nose, and she cried, then wanted to fight. A teacher from Bethel referred to Willie Pearl as a "cry-baby." Miz Lu went and told Willie Pearl to shut her mouth, and not to fuss. The play was very rough.

There was a great deal of drunkenness. Mr. Burkhalter, the prosperous tenant on the Jim King place, was drunk and bouncing around. Out in a buggy on the seat lay Miz Gabe's brother, dead drunk. He was pointed out to us by Mr. Monroe, who seemed to take a malicious pleasure in it.

In the afternoon, we were called into the assembly room by Mr. Crane, who invited all in who wanted "a little instruction." Many filed sheepishly in. The feature was a speech by Mr. Fletcher Smith, the member of the School Board. In introducing him, Mr. Crane stressed the fact that many were obliged to stand in the auditorium, because there were not enough seats to go around. He also stressed the fact that Mr. Fletcher was a mighty good man, a man that stood for something, a man that everyone respected.

Mr. Smith acknowledged the introduction by sayin, "This Crane fellow is a pretty smart man. He brought me in here so he could tell me about those seats. Well, I pledge to you that by this time next year there will be enough seats in here to accommodate all of the people (applause)." Course, there's lots of things I'd like to know, but when you get in the Board of Education, you've got to use all kinds of ways to get things from them boys.

Mr. Smith went on to give a speech about the origin of Thanksgiving. It was a very good speech. He referred to the church, and to his faith, in God and the church. There was an infidel, he said, that was trying to get him to listen to his *infidelicy*. He told him, "No, I don't want to hear nothing about *infidelicy*. I believe what I believe, and you can believe what you believe, but I don't want to go to hell. If I went to hell, I don't think I'd know what to do, and I don't think they'd know what to do with me there. No sir, I didn't want to listen to any of his infidelicy."

After Mr. Smith spoke, Mr. Crane called on many other people, in-

cluding numerous local citizens, and the teacher-trainer from Southern, Mr. Clark, who mildly criticized Mr. Crane's management of the fair. The President of the Community Fair Association for this District spoke, also. At the last, Mr. Crane called on me to speak. I believe that he did this because he wanted to show me what a small factor I was in the community and in his eyes. Mr. Crane dislikes me heartily, I am sure. Part of this is due to the fact that he now thinks that I am not as big a man as he once took me for, and regrets having tried to fool me in his class, and to impress me before. I believe that my wearing of overalls declasses me in his, as in other sights. I think also my prestige suffered with Mr. Crane when I suggested that Mr. A. C. Lewis was coming to visit, and Mr. Crane worked himself to death in order to get the school ready for his visit. When Mr. Lewis didn't come, Mr. Crane thought that I was of no import and was probably lying. Then, of course, Mr. Crane can never forget what I told him in the presence of others that day, when Mr. Lewis was expected and Mr. Crane reproached me for not telling him, and I told him that I thought the school should always be ready for inspection.

In the evening was the concert, and afterward the dance. About 6 o'clock a regular typhoon came up, and delayed us so we missed the concert. Our Thanksgiving meal consisted of back-bone given to us by Miz Gabe and sauerkraut. The wind blew so hard that rain was blown all over the kitchen and dining room, and the kitchen was a puddle as it always is when it rains.

The dance was in the auditorium room. The practice was to empty the room after the free concert and then to charge ten cents, two for fifteen, for the dance afterward.

The dancing, to say the least, was spirited. However, it was not graceful, the dances being what Mr. Bickham calls the "new kind of dancing," and with this none were very familiar. Much of it was mere stamping, all rushing. All kinds of dress was worn, from kimonas to evening dresses, from overalls to double breasted pimp suits. The dancing featured much solo work, boys dancing around by themselves, and couples breaking apart to sashay up, and men twirling their pardners around in pirouettes.

The best dancer was a little twelve year old girl who had slipped in. When her mother found out, she sent in and got her.

There were from fifteen to twenty white boys and girls present. Ernest was master of ceremonies. During the intermission, the crowd was entertained by the dancing member of King Gulley's troupe, on the whole a mediocre, but amusing performance if judged by "big-time" standards. His feature was to dance with a chair, and the marks of his teeth were in the chair when he had finished.

Mr. Ernest was very blasé as master of ceremonies. During the intermission, the crowd flocked onto the floor, blocking the view of Smoky's dancing from the young white people at the end of the room. Mr. Ernest asked them to move back several time. None did.

Mr. Andrew Bridges, a stupid, owl-looking white man who was assigned to the Fair as a deputy officer, moved uncertainly up to assist. Ernest, half-drunk, said, "That's right, Mr. Bridges, make 'em move back," in a commanding tone. Mr. Bridges obediently did so. Mr. Bridges conducts himself as though he is afraid that any moment one of these drunks will push him over.

November 29, 1934.

At midnight or afterward Leman Magee, the uncle of John, who was hit over the head with a piece of fire-wood by Luther Graves last week, came to the house and called me out. He wanted me to take John to Charity Hospital when I went to New Orleans Friday. I agreed to do so.

At 1 o'clock in the afternoon, before I had dressed, Leman came by and came in to take a seat. Leman is one-eyed, and unfortunately, not recognizing him, I asked him if he was the man who was going to the hospital.

After dressing, I drove with Leman to the school, where we picked up Tommie Warren, a first-cousin of John. Tommie had been to New Orleans before. They had received the address of a former resident of the community, one Dent Brooks they thought, but neither could read the slip on which the address was written. On looking at it, I found that it was the address of a Mrs. Dubois at 2206 Bienville Avenue.

I drove up the road about a mile and picked John up.

December 3, 1934.

While Ernest and Horace went over to Mr. Bickham's, Julia stayed to talk with Miz Gabe. Miz Gabe told Julia that she knew a girl had a little baby this year, not so long ago. She was havin' pains, and her mother was cookin' dinner. She was walkin' up and down, and her mother didn't pay her no attention. And directly she went inside, in her own room, and shet the door, and in a little while she said, "Mama, come here!" And there laid a little baby on the floor. Yes, she birthed that baby right on the floor. And she holped her mother pick up the baby, and all the stuff that went with it, and her mother told her she'd better get in that bed. And she got in bed, but she tried to holp her mother dress the little baby. Now, wasn't she smart?

'Cose, that was her fo'th child. And she'd worked hard right up to the time the baby came.

Said Julia, "It must be an awful thing, to see a baby born." Miz Gabe had seen three born. Miz Gabe said, "It sho is, the woman's jus' sweatin' like she's doin' hard work in the fields."

Julia and Miz Gabe were talkin' in the kitchen, while they was a-washin' the dishes. Says Julia, "Sugarman sure does love you." "Yes," said Miz Gabe, "he was born right here in this house." "Sure 'nough," said Julia. "Yes," said Miz Gabe. "When he was born, I took care of 'im until his mother was able to, and he loves me most near as much as he do his own mother."

When Miz Gabe and Julia had come into the living room, and Ernest and Horace had gone, Julia asked again, "So Sugarman was born right in this house?" Miz Gabe said, "Yes. He was birthed right here on the floor." And Julia asked her, "Why did they put her on the floor?" And Miz Gabe said, "It seems like she couldn't birth the baby on the bed, coz it was too soft. So they put her on the floor, on her knees, and she birthed the baby without any trouble at all."

And Julia said, "Who else was here besides you?" And she said, "Aunt Dosha Warren, she was the mid-wife. And Mr. Monroe's wife, and Miz Lu." Said Julia, "I bet Miz Lu knows a lot about helpin' with babies." Miz Gabe said, "Yes, she's not no mid-wife, but she's good to have around." Julia said, "You've got to have a lot of women around

to keep water hot and all that, haven't you?" And Miz Gabe said, "Yes—you've got to have some little baby things there, right handy."

This morning when I came back from town, I stopped by the syrup mill, to pass the time of day with Mr. Boy Bickham. He told me to pass the word along up on the hill that Green Bickham's little boy had died, sudden, after the fair. I went by the school and told Mr. Sibley that the baby was dead, and to tell the children to tell the folks. It seems like the baby was just walkin', and had been up to the fair, for several days, in the bitterly cold weather.

When Miz Gabe was talking to Julia in the kitchen, Miz Gabe said that a little baby had died. "Yes," said Julia, "I had heard about it. How old was it?" "Oh," said Miz Gabe, "It hadn't been weaned yet." (Children here are weaned very late, nearer two years than one.) "No wonder," said Miz Gabe, "that it died. Its mother had had it out to the fair every night." (When Julia had been walking home with Miz Gabe, Friday night, a bitterly cold night, Miz Gabe had told her, "you know, if I had any little chillun, I'd stay at home with 'em. I wouldn't keep 'em out on a night like this. You know it's too cold for children to be out on a night like this. Those women don't even take their babies to the stove, they just stand out where the wind can blow on 'em. Some of 'em take 'em in them tents (i.e., booths), but you know them tents ain't warm enough for a baby."

(Miz Gabe, a very intelligent woman, must have said this to Allie, her sister-in-law, for Allie's baby is eight months old, and Ella Ruth is four. Allie was doing nothing but standing in the cold, outside, holding the baby. It was bitterly cold. Allie must have been offended, for Miz Gabe referred to her as being "very tender-hearted." Sunday morning, Orsell's wife and children came up to our house and "sat" with us a while; later, she told us, when we were about to go home, that Allie was about to go home. She probably said this about the babies to Allie, and Allie's feelings were hurt.)

The child of Green Bickham probably died of pneumonia. Julia faintly remembered, on Thursday, during the bitter cold, a girl holding a baby, who was crying loudly, and watching the exhibit pieces being held up.

December 6th.

Early this morning a Mr. Johnson, a half-brother to Mr. Monroe's wife, came over, bringing some civil war pension papers belonging to his father; he wished to know if it was possible for him to get the pension. His father had died in 1908. He had taken it to a white lawyer in Franklinton, but this man had said that there was nothing that could be done about it. Neither do I, for that matter. His father, he said, had warned him not to trust the white folks around here, that they wouldn't help him get his money.

I told him that I would ask about it in New Orleans, but that I didn't know. His father had belonged to the Tenth U.S. Heavy Artillery. He had enlisted in 1864, and had been discharged in 1867. The old man, he said, had fought with the Yankees, and that after the War he had got some money, but those niggers who went off with the rebels never got anything.

After some conversation, I arose, and he went out into the yard, where, out of ear-shot of Julia, he told me about another predicament. He said that he had homesteaded forty acres. Then he had bought forty acres, and to buy the addition he had borrowed $600 from Mr. Pearce, a merchant, who took a mortgage on both forty's. About four years ago Mr. Pearce had got in a tight, and had told him he wanted the money. Mr. Pearce had said that anyway he could get his money out, he was willing to do it, if he could put it in the loan, alright, if he could put it in the government loan, alright. But, he told Johnson that if he sold the land back to him, he would give it back to him whenever he wanted it, just this time he wanted to get some ready money. So Johnson made over his money to him.

Now, there had been a strange man out with some papers yesterday, and Mr. Johnson was afraid that Mr. Pearce intended to get rid of the land. He had come to me, because he knew I would give him a true answer. Was there anything I could tell him?

Nothing. Even if Johnson's story is true, which may be doubtful, Mr. Pearce seems perfectly within his rights. Furthermore, Johnson's only hope seems to lie in the belief that, since his wife, who quit him,

after 32 years of married life, didn't sign no papers, the forty homesteaded acres are not rightfully Mr. Pearce's.

I drove with Julia over to see Aunt Julie Brock. On the way, Mr. Monroe wanted to go to town to buy a cement sack. I told him I wasn't going there, and asked if he knew Aunt Julie. He said, "No." I thought he must be lying (and he was).[18]

Aunt Julie is an old woman, somewhere in her eighties. Her mother had six children, all by different men. Aunt Julie was the oldest, by a white man named Perry. Her sister Ellen was by Tom Burch, another white man, who lived on a nearby place. Adeline was by Clowers, a colored man. Jack was by Sam Thomas, a colored man. Fleet was by George Dillon, a colored man, and Baily Miller was by Lewis Miller.

Aunt Julie is wrinkled, brown, like an Indian, with black hair of which she tells us she was once very proud, that she could tell any girls they might be lighter than she was, but didn't none of em have hair as straight as hers. She has an extremely pleasant face and smile. In talking of one of her sons, Ned, it seems that he killed a white man, and, she said, they got him away through the woods, don't no one know where he is now. Don't no one know if he got away.

(Mr. Monroe the next day told me that the white folks, the Burches, had slipped him away through the woods. All this took place across the river.)

Going back home by the syrup mill, Mr. Monroe was there. We brought him home. There was some teasing about him stopping by the way. Evidently there must be an affair between Mr. Monroe and Andrew Brown's daughter. Probably he is the father of some of the children.

The Lynching

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On January 11, 1935, Horace Mann Bond learned that Jerome Wilson had been lynched. "He was found Friday morning at the crossroad going from Bethel to Franklinton," wrote Ernest Magee, "dead lying in the ditch." Bond, then in New Orleans, could not bear to tell his wife the news over the telephone. He sent her a letter—she was in Nashville visiting her family—and enclosed two newspaper clippings.[1]

Julia was shocked and fearful. "We cannot go back and live there," she wrote back. "We are so unprotected. . . . That little community is at the mercy of whatever impulse may come over these white people." She tried to dissuade Horace from visiting Franklinton with Robert Park, who was visiting him from Chicago. "Coming back so soon after the lynching with what are obviously northern white men will make you an object of suspicion more than ever."[2]

In Washington Parish blacks felt scared; whites feared black retaliation. Rumors abounded: black teachers had fled; black schools were closed; black maids had quit working for white people. Leo M. Favrot, an official of the General Education Board based in Baton Rouge, reported that whites in Washington Parish suspected that "Reds, the NAACP, or some other organization" was stirring up "an organized spirit of opposition" among the black population.

From New Orleans, Bond wrote to the superintendent of schools. "While I was out there at Star Creek," he explained, "I was always afraid that I might do something that would bring harm or suspicion directed at the Negroes with whom I dealt." Was it safe for him to

return? Did any whites suspect him of being connected with the Wilsons? Was there "any feeling that I was a spy or something of that sort?" A letter from Franklinton telling him that his car insurance had been canceled added to Bond's unease.

Not surprisingly, the Bonds had serious qualms about going back to Washington Parish. Despite assurances as to their safety from white friends there, a visit to Franklinton on February 8 settled the question: they decided not to return to Star Creek. The following accounts of their brief trip explain why.[3]

February 8, 1935. Julia Bond's account.

Horace and I announced our plan of going back to Star Creek for the day at the breakfast table. Dr. [Burbridge] told very lugubrious tales of what would happen to us if we did go. He repeated the story of his being run out of Monroe, Louisiana, many years ago and told us many discouraging anecdotes.[4] I was not afraid at all (so I thought) but these stories made me a little nervous. We drove through town and got presents for our friends in Star Creek. These consisted of a bed-spread for Miss Gabe, cigars for Mr. Ernest and Mr. Bickham, and a bracelet for Thelma and a hammer for Orsell and candy for the family. The day was pretty and we were very merry at the beginning of the drive. As we approached Franklinton we became a little constrained. We drove into the town and saw very few people—only one Negro. Perhaps there were as many people on the streets as ever, but they seemed deserted to me.

We drove to the Ford agency to see Mr. Greenlaw, the Ford dealer. He was not in but would be back at one o'clock. He was attending a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. His son-in-law was there and returned a flashlight of ours that had been there for some time. (We had lost it some time in October.) Then we drove over to the Washington Parish Training School. I got out at Mrs. Barker's. (She is the wife of the principal.)

She seemed very glad to see me. We talked for some time without mentioning the lynching. She told me of her uncle's death and of the children's Christmas presents. Finally she referred to the "trouble."

She said that she was tempted to write me and to tell me if I had any fears about coming back, not to worry.

"They ain't bother you. Mr. Barker says they can't be too nice in the stores. They jump around trying to wait on you. I don't ever go to town. I buy just what I have to have and don't waste no time with them. I don't go down there cause if they say any thing to me I sho' am going to talk back. Mr. Barker says that I talk too much. My mother said to me 'Daughter, you must be careful. You know that is a backwoods community and not like home (New Orleans) where it is a blow for a blow.' But since this trouble I'd just like to go home to live. If Mr. Barker could get a job I'd move right away. I'd like to send the children away to school. Blanche wants to come and live with you. We're so glad you've come back. We thought that you weren't coming. But you needn't be afraid. Nobody ain't going to hurt you."

She prepared lunch for us and I helped her to churn. Miss Todd came in. She is one of the teachers at the training school. She told us that she went home Friday night after the lynching, as did all of the teachers, but she and the others returned Sunday night. She said that she went to see Mr. Lewis's assistant while she was in Baton Rouge and she brought in the subject of the lynching very nicely. She said, "You know that we are going through a pretty bad time now, Mr. Rogers."

He replied, "Yes, Ella, I know about that."

This was Field Day at the school and they assumed that we had come for this occasion. All of the teachers from Star Creek with the exception of Mr. Crane were there. Willie Pearl, Henrietta and Olee were playing on the basketball team. I walked over to the field with Miss Todd and spoke to all I knew. The teachers were not too glad to see me.

Mr. Amacker said in a loud voice, "Did you bring your pistol, Mrs. Bond?"

Surprised, I replied that I had not.

"Well," said he, "You need it up here."

Miss Gabe told me about going to see Jerome's body the night after the mobbing. "He was washed and dressed and laid out but it was awful the way they beat that boy. One side of his face was mashed in,

and you could see the hole in his head. You couldn't tell that it was him except for his mouth. It makes me so nervous whenever I think about it. His po' mother is speechless."

(Mrs. Barker said, "An old man around here told me that if these colored newspapers wouldn't print so much about this trouble that it'd be easier on us. But I told him they were saying things that we couldn't say. We're here and can't help ourselves, but they can talk for us. I just want to have 'em go on and do everything they can. Whoever wrote that up about Mr. Wilson she told it straight!" And she looked meaningly at me. I told her that I hadn't seen that copy yet but I'd try to look it up.)

After leaving Julia with Mrs. Barker, Horace stopped by Washington Parish Training School.

A field meet for all parish schools was going on. A group of the teachers were standing on the school house steps. None were very cordial. I had to ask Barker to let me speak to him. He agreed, but first walked me over to his office where he locked the door. Whenever he heard the outside door creak, he would talk loudly about school records or some such nonsense having nothing to do with our real conversation.

I asked him if he thought it would be alright to come back. He did not answer me directly. He had talked to Stringfield and to Greenlaw, he said, and they had wondered why I had been so nervous; wondered if anybody there had warned me not to come back. And Dr. Brock, the sheriff,[5] had been in Baton Rouge, and some Negro who had known him before, but whom he did not know, asked him what was going on at Franklinton—to what extent it was true that the teachers had been asked to leave, as it was reported.

Dr. Brock had come back, and gone out to see Barker. "Barker," he said, "you know that we've been treating all of you folks right. Now, it ain't fair that these stories should be circulating in these nigger newspapers. Now, some of you fellows ought to go down there and make them take that back."

Hence the letter from the teachers stating that it had all been a mistake that they had been asked to go away.

Barker would not commit himself as to the wisdom of my return. "You know, I think you'd be safer out there at Star Creek than I am here. It would be alright, anyway, except for these colored pimps. They're likely to go to the white man, and tell him you said something that you never did say."

I interrupted him.

"I have heard that there were some Negroes mixed up in that lynching. Is that so?"

"Yes," he replied. "And that's what makes it so bad. If you could only trust your own color, you could feel alright. Of course, you could stay up there in the country, among the home folks at Star Creek, and you'd be alright."

"But," I said, "I'd have to come to town to get something to eat."

"That is true."

Mr. Barker also told me that the leading men of the town disapproved of the lynching, but that lawless elements had done it.

I left him with thanks.

Returned to town, I saw Mr. Greenlaw, after a wait of some few minutes. Meanwhile, I talked about the weather with one of his partners who was in the sales room.

Mr. Greenlaw, when he saw me, immediately plunged into an excited defense of the community. All of the old settlers, he said, disapproved of the lawless action of a few hot headed men. But it was over, and there was no use stirring things up. "Why, Bond, these nigger newspapers are doing an awful lot of harm to your people. They're just agitating, agitating, agitating. If they let the thing drop everything would be alright."

(I started to tell him that the Negro newspapers had suppressed news of the affair in the fear that they might cause the lynching of Jerome. Now Jerome was lynched, and there was nothing to do about it.)

Mr. Greenlaw gave me assurances as to his guarantee of my safety. As I was ready to leave, I told him that my insurance on the car had been canceled.

He seemed dumbfounded at the news. Disclaiming any knowledge of it, he assured me that it could be renewed in some other company.

From Greenlaw's we went up in the country. At Star Creek, coming in by the sand bed, we were nearly stuck. We stopped at Miz Fannie Bickham's first. Mr. Boy was not at home. Miz Fannie was glad to see us, and we, to see her. "Somebody loves us, anyway." Her joy was genuine.

We talked to her for a little while. She said for us to go on, that she would come on over later. As we passed Seymour's lane leading down to Miz Gabe's, we stopped, and got out to walk up to Miz Lu's house. Miz Lu had heard the car and come to the door. She, too, was glad to see us. She took us in and introduced us to her mother, an old black woman who is almost completely paralyzed. Miz Lu is obviously a mulatto. Her mother can hear still, but she cannot talk. We spoke to her, and Miz Lu said, "Ma, these is mighty fine folks."

We had seen Willie Pearl in town, playing basketball. Mr. Ranse was off ploughing.

From there we went on toward Miz Gabe's. We could see Thelma and Sugarman playing in the yard, with some other children we could not recognize. As we approached, Thelma broke off from the group and ran into the house. Just as we drove up, Miz Gabe came out through the gallery.

Thelma and Sugarman told us how they appreciated the books we had sent to them. Thelma repeated "Little Boy Blue," which she had learned from one of them.

We went on up to the house. Here we sat down and talked a while. I waited until the children had gone out to play in the yard, and I asked Miz Gabe about the trouble, and about our safety. Miz Gabe said that it was bad enough about the white folks, but when there was colored pimps joinin' in, too, that made it downright dangerous.

Miz Fannie chimed in. Yes, she had heard that there were some colored pimps in the killing. One of 'em she knew. He had a nub for a hand. (I wondered if this could be the Dillon boy, from Franklinton, who does drive a truck and has associated with the white men as companion in crime for a number of years. He has several fingers cut off. He is the cousin to Mr. Ernest.)

(Mr. Barker had told me that one of his students had found a wrench near the place where Jerome Wilson's body was dumped out of the car. The wrench, he said, was identified as the property of the electric light plant, and it was suspected that the Negro mechanic who works there was also in the gang. The hammer which was found in the jail was identified, as belonging to this same man.

One wonders whether the Negroes were actually in the lynching, either as a result of blackmail or having been paid; or whether it is a tale told by the white men responsible who have actually convinced the Negroes.)

Miz Gabe also said the mob was led by the son of Deputy Sheriff Woods, who was killed last August, and over whose death the entire case had raged. The boy, she said, had come from New Jersey for Christmas, and had stayed over for the lynching.

Miz Gabe and Miz Fannie urged us not to come back. They actually suggested that we should be out of the community by nightfall.

I found that there was a bottle of grape-juice in the kitchen. I opened this, and brought in three fingers of whiskey which I had brought up from New Orleans. Miz Gabe and Miz Fannie drank with enthusiasm. I was sorry that I had not brought more than just enough to "wet their whistles."

After hearing the discouraging accounts given by these two, women, I decided not to come back. I immediately began to pack up my books, leaving the furniture and the bed linen and the food and other stuff in the house.

We said goodbye to them. Before we left, they insisted that we accept presents; Miz Gabe gave us a half-dozen eggs, and Miss Fannie gave us about a peck of peanuts.

Leaving there about four, we were back in New Orleans before six.

Bond settled into his post as dean of Dillard University. But although New Orleans was now their home, the Bonds were concerned about the fate of the Wilson family. Luther was still in jail. His mother,

Tempie, had been freed on bond but the shock of events had unhinged her mind and she was committed to a psychiatric ward at New Orleans Charity Hospital. John Wilson had been forced to sell half his land and mortgage the rest. "I am ruin[ed]," he wrote Walter White of the NAACP. "Please help." But the NAACP, struggling to stay afloat in the depths of the Depression, had no money to assist the families of lynching victims.[6]

Horace and Julia Bond tried to help. They knew that Tempie Wilson had relatives in the North, but tried to dissuade the family from moving to Chicago. It would much better, they thought, if the Wilsons could be set up on a farm somewhere outside Washington Parish, even if only as tenants. Horace appealed to friends, acquaintances, private foundations, and government agencies. Revealing some of his own feelings about the matter, he wrote to one friend: "It is a little bit of hell to think of this man working all his life according to all of the conventional virtues, and then at this late date forced to give it all up."[7]

Bond started writing "Forty Acres and a Mule" with a view to helping the Wilsons. Offering the partially completed manuscript to Harper and Brothers, he explained that John Wilson should receive half of the royalties, and that a further quarter would be given to the Rosenwald School in Bethel—a memorial to Jerome Wilson.[8]

Forty Acres and a Mule

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Chapter One

FREEDOM COMES TO ISOM WILSON

Isom Wilson was just a shirt-tailed boy when they brought him to Washington Parish. The year must have been close to 1835, for Isom was a grown man when the surrender came in 1865. His father's real name, if he had one, was Will Ward, because Ward was the name of the Virginia planter who started out from St. James County, Virginia, with Will, and Martha, and their child Isom.[1]

Will Ward, so Isom's mother told him later, was a native African. Perhaps that was why he was so stubborn about leaving Virginia for Louisiana, when his master decided to sell them all down in the Southwest. Will couldn't have known that his master had to sell his slaves or his land, on account of the Tidewater land being worn out from planting tobacco and corn year in and year out for two hundred years. At any rate, Will didn't want to leave Virginia, and he sulked. Mas'r Ward paid no attention to his sulking, aside from giving him twenty lashes the second day out from Richmond.

The third day out Will acted particularly stubborn. So Mas'r Ward staked him out, spreadeagling both legs, his head, and one arm. Mercifully they left one arm free so that he could keep the steel collar from choking him to death in the night. They brought him food in a wooden bowl, and water in a blue glass jug.

It rained all that night. The next morning, when Mas'r Ward went to unchain Will, he found that he had broken the blue glass jug into little pieces. He kicked and beat Will, but Will didn't say a thing. They chained him by his collar to the end of the wagon where little Isom and his mother were riding. Mas'r Ward was careful about the slaves

while he was taking them overland; Martha was going to have another baby, and little Isom rode in the wagon with her because Mas'r Ward didn't want him to look puny from walking two thousand miles when they go to Louisiana. Every now and then he would make little Isom get out and walk alongside the wagon for exercise.

On the day after the night when they had staked Will out, the slave caravan had gone about ten miles when Will fell down behind the wagon. Mas'r Ward let the wagon drag him a little while, and then he rode back behind the wagon to see what was the matter with Will. He thought he was malingering again, but when he looked at his face, he saw that something was really the matter with Will. Will was worth fifteen hundred dollars in Louisiana, and so Mas'r Ward put him in the wagon with Martha and little Isom and let him ride.

Will wouldn't eat anything, and he wouldn't say anything. Mas'r Ward thought he was just another surly black brute. Louisiana would take that out of him.

Louisiana never had the chance. By the time Will died, in a day or so, Mas'r Ward discovered that Will had broken that blue glass jug on purpose, and ground up some of the pieces against his steel fetters. Then he had swallowed a handful or so of the blue glass powder.

When Mas'r Ward finally got to Louisiana, he sold Martha and her expectant baby and Isom to a planter who had two plantations, one on the Bogue Chitto River, just across the state line from Mississippi, and the other up on the Red River in North Louisiana. Martha and Isom were sent to the place on the Bogue Chitto. In 1859, when Isom was about eighteen years old, one of his master's relatives bought him for $1500.00, and gave him to Hezekiah Magee for a wedding present.[2]

Hezekiah Magee was one of a number of planters who lived along the river valley of the Bogue Chitto. The plantation was located in Washington Parish. Washington Parish is one of the sub-divisions of the old Spanish province of West Florida, and the entire section of Louisiana east of the Mississippi is included in what were once known as "The Florida Parishes."

The Florida parishes were just across Lake Ponchartrain from the City of New Orleans, but they might just as well have been a thousand miles away. Commerce and civilization were water borne, and they flowed down the Mississippi, and over the lakes and bayous that linked Latin Louisiana to the East by means of the Old Spanish Trail. The Florida Parishes remained, for the most part, unsettled stretches of virgin pine forests, with settlement taking root only along the rivers. The settlers came from Georgia, from the Carolinas, from Virginia, by way of the central Mississippi plateau. Louisiana west of the river bears the mark of the Latin; the Florida Parishes are Scotch-Irish, except where immigration since the Civil War has brought in colonies of Italians, Hungarians, Germans, and the Jew.

There are three rivers flowing down from Mississippi through Washington Parish to the gulf. The Pearl River on the east separates Louisiana from Mississippi. The Bogue Chitto runs right down through the middle of the Parish. On the West the Tchefuncta River divides Washington from Tangipahoa Parish. Plantation settlement followed these three rivers. In the backwoods were the poor whites, principally squatters, "sand hogs" in the vernacular of the country. In 1860 Isom Wilson was one of a thousand slaves reported by the census of that year for Washington Parish. There were two thousand white persons listed in 1860; less than one hundred and fifty of five hundred white families were slave-owners. Title to the land, aside from the plantation, remained with the Federal Government. Homesteading became possible only after the Civil War, and the piney woods were too inaccessible and too difficult of clearance at a time when a man of capital could pay for a bottom land plantation in one year with a good cotton crop.

Up in Pike County, Mississippi, there lived a planter named Daniels. He had a likely male slave called Wiley, who was the son of a half-Indian Negro woman and a full blooded Choctaw brave. Wiley had learned how to tan leather from his Indian folk, and he was handy with it all of his life. Mas'r Daniels claimed that he looked too much like an Indian, and was afraid that he might run away with them some

day. So he sold Wiley down the Bogue Chitto to a Magee who lived across the river from Hezekiah.

Wiley already had children who were almost grown in Mississippi, but he raised another family on the Bogue Chitto. On account of his great skill with leather he was never obliged to do any hard work. He was a great one to make chairs, curing a cow hide and stretching it to make the seat. When he died, he left each one of his children a chair, made by himself. Wiley Daniels' grandchildren still treasure those chairs, and the leather is just as tight as the day he tied the thongs together, more than seventy years ago.[3]

Wiley's favorite child in his new Louisiana home was Mandy. Mandy grew up with the white folks; as they say when a distinction is to be made between a field hand and a house servant, she belonged to the latter class "who was raised by the white folks." Isom Wilson didn't do any field labor for Hezekiah, on the other side of the river, other than that of directing the other slaves what to do. It was natural that Isom finally started crossing the river to see Mandy, and finally they were married in the year before the big house. That is, they jumped over the broom, with Hezekiah and all of the other white folks looking on as their favorite servants were wed.[4]

By that time the big War was going on. It made no difference to the people living up and down the Bogue Chitto. Toward the end of the war the poor white folks back in the woods started bushwhacking and assassinating, and every now and then you would hear of some freighter being robbed on the way from Franklinton to Mandeville, or New Orleans. They raised enough cotton and wool, and they could spin it, right on the place, for clothes, and food was more plentiful than ever because the big planters didn't raise as much cotton as before the war.

Along about the end of the war the rebels came first, and they took all of the horses and mules they could find, which was not many. Hezekiah Magee sent Isom back into the woods with a drove of stock and cattle, and he stayed there until he got word to come back.

One day the Federals came. The old Missis got the news that they were coming before they got there. The big house was built out of logs,

hewn on the sides to make them rest flat against one another. There were clapboards nailed along joinings. The old lady made Isom and another boy take down the facing off the door. She had a carpetbag full of greenbacks. They took long sticks and poked money back between the logs; and then they put the facing back on the door frame.

The Federals came just a little before sundown. Isom remembered the Captain riding up into the front yard, where Hezekiah and the old Missus were standing.

The Captain took off his hat and asked them if they had any stock. Mr. Hezekiah told him to go to Hell. The Captain made some of his men take the old man and lock him up in a room. Then they swept that farm clean as a whistle; all but the stock, which was hidden away in the woods, and the greenbacks, which were stuck back behind the door facing.[5]

Isom Wilson was a faithful servant to Hezekiah Magee, and Hezekiah thought the world of all of Isom. When they got the news that Freedom had been declared, Hezekiah called Isom to him. Isom told the story later.

He said, "They just turned the people loose, like you'd open the stock gate and turn the stock loose. My master said to me, he said, 'Well, Isom, you're free—you're just as free as I am. Your are free to go where you want to go.'"

And Isom just looked at his master. "Mas'r," he said, "I ain't got nowhere to go, ain't nothing to go nowhere with, Mas'r." And his mas'r said, "You can stay here with us. We'll pay you the best way we can, until you get yourself started."

Said Isom, "When the niggers got free, we all got notice that they was going to give us all forty acres and a mule. They was to be furnished until they made a crop. Didn't nobody get a mule; the mule come in parts of the country, but the niggers had to buy 'em. By my mas'r give me an ole wore out plough-horse. The old horse died of old age; I kep' him until he died."[6]

Isom stayed there on the place, and he worked on the share. When Hezekiah died he was still living with him. Isom raised Ferdie and Andrew Magee; they were just lads of boys when Hezekiah died. They

called him their colored father. There were other children: Roscoe, Tessie, and Jennie I. Many years later Ferdie Magee sold the property he had fallen heir to through Hezekiah Magee to John Wilson, the son of Isom.[7]

After Isom had raised Hezekiah's children, Andrew Magee told Isom about a quarter section that could be homesteaded, laying right next to Hezekiah's old home place. Andrew put Isom on this land, and he showed him how to prove it, and how to take possession. When he had proved it up, Andrew got one hundred acres, and a fraction, and Isom got sixty acres and a fraction. That is where Isom Wilson raised all of his children, and where he lived until he died, an old man.

After he got his own land, Isom Wilson never travelled far. There was no railroad in the parish, and all of the goods brought in to the stores had to be freighted in. Almost until the day of his death, Isom Wilson was a freighter. The railroad came through in 1912, and Isom died in 1911. Until that time, they would load up at Franklinton with cotton, or corn, or some such truck. The freighters usually travelled together, and principally in the time just before Christmas when the traces were still dry and the crops had been laid by for the year, and settlement had been made and tenants were beginning to figure where they would be next year and who would furnish them.

The freight wagons were long and narrow, high wheeled, to pass along the narrow traces and through the deep bogs along the way. They used two yoke of oxen to the wagon, and the trip to Mandeville took two days and a night. It was forty miles from Franklinton to Mandeville.

When the drovers got to Mandeville, the boss man usually gave them a dollar or so to enjoy themselves, during the night before they loaded up from the barges which brought the goods across Lake Ponchartrain from New Orleans. The drovers were mostly young men, and they would all get drunk and gamble in Mandeville on the night they spent in camp on the way back.

Once Isom Wilson took his little boy John with him to Mandeville. Isom came back with another wagon and left John to come back with a white man who was driving two wagons. The white man started

drinking as soon as he got to Mandeville, and by the time they started back he was dead drunk, lying on the wagon seat with his head resting on a barrel of flour that was behind him.

When they go out to camp, that night, he just rolled out of the wagon. John Wilson tucked him in, and he took his wallet from him for safe keeping. The white man sobered up when they were nearly back to Franklinton. He was ashamed of himself, and he knew John had the wallet. But he never asked him for it—he knew it was in good hands. John carried the wallet on home with him, and gave it to his mother.

Several days afterward, the white man came by the house for his wallet. John wasn't at home, but his mother, Mandy, gave the man the wallet. The story got around through the country, and from then on people knew that John Wilson was an honest lad, although he was just a lad of a boy.

Isom Wilson was a man like this: If you'd treat him right, he'd treat you right; if you didn't treat him right, he wouldn't have anything to do with you any more. He was well respected in the neighborhood, and he raised his boys and girls to be honest, dependable, shifty men and women. One by one they married off, and Isom helped them buy land and settle down on their own little places. Isom always told his boys that they should never take their wives to some white man's place, for to be a tenant too; and he wouldn't let none of his girls marry any man who wasn't shifty like himself, and gave good promise. He and Mandy were mighty strict on their children, not like the careless way people let their children run around these days, like calves in the woods. He taught his girls to respect themselves, and he wouldn't let anybody else not respect them.

One day Ophelia was ploughing in the field that lay next to the road. Isom didn't often let his girls work in the fields, but it just happened he was hard up for a force, the boys being off cutting ties or something, and this ploughing had to be done. So he set Ophelia at it. She had just turned a furrow at one end of the fence when along came a white drummer, driving a buggy. He stopped in the road across from

where Ophelia was turning the plough, and he called out to her. "Say, gal, you want to do a little business?" All Ophelia could think of was to scream, and she screamed way out loud. Isom was back of the house, patching on a pig pen that needed mending. He heard her yell, and he ran through the house and got his shot gun down off the peg as he ran. When the drummer saw the old man flying out to the fence with the gun in his hand, he lashed his horse, and away he went. Old Isom saw what was happening, and Ophelia just stood there, yelling at the top of her voice. Isom took out after the drummer on foot, down the road, hoping to catch a pot shot at him before he turned the bend in the road a mile away. He couldn't catch up, and the drummer got away.

News of that got around, too, and didn't anybody try to joree with any of Isom's girls after that.

The little shirt tailed boy who came from Virginia before the war was an old man when he died. He had raised eleven children by the time he died, he and Mandy together on the old home place they had got through the help of Andrew Magee. Minnie was the oldest, and after her came Simon, Laura, Cornelia, Ada, Ida, Ella, John, William, Samuel, and Ophelia. All of the children, like their father Isom and their mother Mandy, were real shifty folks, and they married into good families and accumulated.

Isom died in 1911. It was forty six years after he had told Hezekiah, "Mas'r, I ain't got nowhere to go, ain't got nothin' to go nowhere with," and Hezekiah had told him, "You can stay here with us, until you can get yourself started."

Isom's children had seen him get himself pretty well started, and he had seen them pretty well started off on the land. The Wilson children owned more than a thousand acres of good land when Isom died. He died on the gallery of the little old house he had built on the part of the section he had got through the help of Andrew Magee. They were all sitting out on the gallery, just before first-dark—old Isom was dozing away in a chair, and nobody said anything, because the old man had been right puny of late and they wanted him to take his rest.

John was there, and Minnie, and Simon, and Samuel. All at once John heard a dove singing nearby, and then he saw a dove light on the railing of the gallery, right close to where Isom Wilson was dozing away. Then the dove flew away. John saw it, and so did Minnie and Simon and Samuel. They didn't say anything for a while. Then Simon got up and went over to Isom and put his hand on his shoulder. "Pa!" he said.

Isom never stirred a bit. He must have died there, peaceful like, while he was sitting there, just about the time the dove flew down and settled on the railing for a minute before flying away again.

Chapter Two

THE HALF-WHITE FOLKS WHO GREW UP WITH ISOM

It is a hard thing to understand how all of the people in Washington Parish, white and black, are related to each other. It is also a hard thing to know how Isom managed to get ahead so far, and why so many other people of his time didn't get ahead. The people in those times lived like Barbarians, both the white people and the colored people. It is mighty hard to try to untangle where all of the cousins and uncles and nephews and nieces come in—because nearly everyone up there is a cousin, or an uncle, or a niece, to everybody else.

Suppose we think of the white men who owned slaves in those times, and the colored people they owned, people of the same age of Isom Wilson, or maybe a little older. There were two brothers who lived on the river near where Clifton is now, named Jake Magee and Fleet Magee. They were kin to all of the other Magees who had settled up and down the river from Mississippi on down. Jake and Fleet were nephews to Hezekiah Magee, who owned Isom Wilson.[8]

Another white man was named old Jeff Miller.[9] He owned two or three plantations in Mississippi, and one on the Louisiana side. Then there were Bill and Jim Burris. They lived around Franklinton, and the family had always run a big plantation and a big store there. It was said that the Burrises were white Indians, and they laid claim to being part Choctaw. Bill and Jim Burris were young men when the surrender came.[10]

Another white man, prominent at the time of the surrender, was Dr. Amacker. Dr. Amacker was a foreigner to those parts, having

come in from somewhere else. He soon fitted into the life, and became very prominent. During the Reconstruction time he fought the Republicans mighty hard. When Grant ran for President in 1868 against Seymour, Dr. Amacker was given the credit for returning 638 votes in Washington Parish for Seymour to none for Grant.

Then there was John Magee, a brother to Hezekiah. He had a plantation on the Bayou Sara, and he finally sold out in Washington Parish and moved over there.

Then there was Mr. Tommie Graves, who was just a lad of a boy when the surrender came, but whose family had been considerable before the War. Mr. Tommie always lived on the Creek, where he had a mill and a lot of property until they built the railroad through Clifton and all of the stores moved over to that town. Mr. Tommie was known far and wide as one of the best lawyers throughout the section.[11]

Then there were the Cranes, a mighty respectable family in the olden times.[12] They lived principally across the river from Franklinton, but they owned land North of the town as well. Tom Trigger Bickham was a white man who owned a little water mill halfway between Clifton and Hackley. Tom Trigger got his name from being known as a dead shot, and a ready shot, in the olden times. Tom Trigger went to the War, and when he came back he had a pistol with fifteen scratches on it. He said that each scratch stood for a Yankee he had killed with that pistol. They do say that when Tom Trigger died he had five more scratches on the trigger of that old horse pistol.[13]

If you look at the map, you will see that all of these white men lived along the rivers and creeks. That is where the white people who had any money or property settled in the early days. They did that both because it brought them near to water, and because the land was better. Bored wells were not known in those days, and if you lived back in the hills you had to go down fifty or more feet for water. So the prosperous white people settled in the flats.

The hills were left to the poor white trash, and were used to range stock through. In all of that section South of Franklinton, and over to where Bogalusa is now and below, there was scarcely a Negro slave in

the whole section. The white people there were wild ones, sand flies, "hoogins," as they were often called.

There were mighty few regular families during slavery, and right after. All of the marrying was done by jumping over the broom, as Isom and Mandy were wed. Right after the War it was even worse than that. People just took up with whomever they wanted to.

During slavery, of course, it was hard to tell just who was who. About the only time you could tell who was the father of a child was when a white baby was born. That was because the white men wouldn't let anybody else fool with a black woman when they were having her, and you could be pretty sure whose baby it was when it turned up.[14]

Jake and Fleet Magee were good for that. They are two reasons why it is so hard now to separate between who are cousins and not among the colored people in Washington Parish. You remember that they were white, two brothers.

Well, Jake had children by several different colored women. He would have them for a time, and then he would get another. The only time he had any trouble was with a slave named Tom. Tom was reputed to be an African nigger—people said he was a "two headed nigger" because he could tell fortunes and fates. He was slave to Jake Magee, and he had been slying up to Minerva for some little time. Jake didn't know that. Minerva had her first baby by Jake Magee, and she called him Green Magee.

Minerva was working around the big house, and they say that one day old man Jake Magee noticed that she was in a family way again. So he asked her when the baby was coming. The way she answered him, he knew it wasn't going to be his. He was terrible angry, and he got his rifle down and went out to the field where old Tom was chopping cotton with the gang.

Jake Magee wanted to whoop Tom, and he told Tom to put his hoe down and come up to the barn. Tom wouldn't put his hoe down. Then Jake Magee told some of the other slaves to catch him. Tom was stubborn, and he said to the other slaves, "If you put your hands on me I'll

break your head with this hoe—I'll bust your brains out." None of the slaves would advance on him, for they knew Tom was a surly nigger, and would do what he said.

Jake Magee just stood there, getting madder and madder. Tom was just as stubborn as ever. He backed away from the gang and vaulted a fence, and started walking backward, facing the gang and Jake Magee as he went. They knew he was making for the Spring next to the Creek, where the swamps began.

Then Jake called out, "By God, Tom, if you don't stop, I'm going to shoot holes through your stubborn black hide." And Tom yelled back at him, "Mas'r Jake, you'll have to shoot me 'cause I ain't goin' to stop." So Jake Magee raised his rifle and he shot Tom down. He fell forward on the ground, just where the spring curbing was. The old folks used to say that the spring never was good any more, that it bubbled red with Tom's blood, and Mas'r Jake had to move it somewhere else to get water fit for man or beast.

Tom's baby was a boy, and he was named Tom Barker, because after Tom was killed, Jake sold Minerva to old man Barker.

As he had Minerva, Jake Magee had Dorcas. His baby by her was called Bill Doc Magee, the middle name for Dorcas. By Ellen Robinson, Jake Magee had George Magee. By Sarah, Jake Magee had a baby named Mary Magee.[15] The family names of these women came after slavery; before emancipation they were just called Ellen, and Dorcas, and Sarah, and Minerva.

While he was having these colored women, Jake Magee had four boys and three girls by a white woman he had married. They didn't always recognize it, but it makes all of Jake Magee's children by the colored women half-brothers and sisters to his children by the white woman. Then, all of the colored women Jake Magee had later had children by other white men, and by other colored men. You can see how that would mix all of the relations up to begin with.

Now, Fleet Magee was almost as bad after colored women as his brother, Jake. After the war, Fleet had a colored baby by Harriet; he was named Eldridge Magee. Fleet also had three colored children by

Harriet's sister, Sarah, another daughter of old man Eli Magee. They were called Will, Lee and George Magee. They were raised by their grandparents, Eli and Minerva.[16]

Fleet Magee had another baby by Cindie Bell. Cindie was a shifty old woman who never married, but she had a houseful of shifty children, all by different men. They always wanted to get Cindie to tenant for them, both the white and the colored farmers, because they said that, "When you get Cindie, you get a laborer and a woman, too." Strange as it may sound, all of Cindie's children turned out well. She would move from plantation to plantation, and wherever she went she had another baby by the man who owned the plantation or the farm. Fleet Magee's baby by Cindie was named Alice Magee.[17] That made Jake Magee uncle to Alice, through his brother Fleet. It also made Alice double cousins with Harriet's child by Jake Magee. There are many other relations you can figure out that will show you how these families came to be so mixed up in the end.

Fleet Magee raised a white family by his proper wife. There were three boys and two girls in this family. The boys moved away, but the girls stayed behind and married men from the Parish. Jacob is dead now, and so is Noel. Silas is living in San Antonio, Texas, now. Minnie married a Babington in the parish, and Emma married a Bateman in the parish. The same thing happened in many of the other white families. Most of the wealthy families had boys, and the boys would move off to the city, or go far away to places like Texas or North Louisiana or even to California. The girls would stay at home, usually. There wouldn't be any one for them to marry, often, in their own set, and so they'd marry some white boy who didn't have anything but who was just coming up in the world. Some of these poor white boys were industrious, and with the help of their wives' inheritance have made it real well. Others were just as trifling now as they ever were.

In the neighborhood of the Bethel community, where the children of Isom Wilson now live, there are other families besides the children of Jake and Fleet Magee that are half-white, or used to be before those mulatto children began to marry black men.

Near Clifton lives old Aunt Julie Brock. Aunt Julie says that she is ninety, although she really doesn't know.[18] She can remember well when the white caps[19] used to beat the colored people for registering, right after the Civil War. That was the time when most of the colored people got their names. They had been Magee's Sam, or Bickham's Harry, until the Yankees came around to let the colored people vote. They had to register up to vote, and they had to have names to register by in the books. So they took names for themselves; sometimes they would call themselves after their masters, such as Sam Magee, or Harry Bickham. Sometimes they would take brand new names, like Washington, or Jefferson, or by most any other name that seemed to strike their fancy.

Aunt Julie used to live across the river up near the Mississippi line. The Brocks and the Burches owned most of the land in that direction, and up into Mississippi from there. They didn't have much dealing with anyone else, anywhere else, because it was so far from every place, and hard to get at. Aunt Julie's father was said to have been an overseer named Perry. She was her mother's first child. Her mother was a half-white woman, who was part Indian with only a little colored blood, if any at all. She was reputed in that country to have been the prettiest little piece there ever was. Aunt Julie even now has long, straight black hair, and when she smiles you could think that she was almost a young girl. When she was young, she says, all of the other girls used to envy her hair, and she was awful proud of it. One of her sons bought her a new set of teeth, several years ago, and when she smiles you don't even see any wrinkles around her mouth.

After Aunt Julie's mother had her by this poor white man Perry, she lived with Tom Burch. Tom Burch owned a plantation across the river, and all of his people were well off. Aunt Julie's mother, Pennie, had a baby by Tom Burch who was named Ellen. Pennie had another baby by George Dillon, a half-white man from near Warnerton. She had another baby after that by Sam Thompson, a black man. The last two children, Fleet Dillon and Jack Thompson, were born after the Surrender.[20] Pennie was like most half-white women—when she was young and real pretty, she had children by white men. Then she had children

by a half-white man; and finally she took up with a black man, and had a baby by him.

Just after slavery times, when her mother Pennie was well near middle age, and Julie herself was a very pretty girl, old man Tom Burch, who was nearly sixty years old, took a fancy to the girl—as he had twenty years or so before to the mother. He put Julie into a little cabin just beyond a clump of trees from the big house, and he kept her there for two or three years. She had one baby by him, and she named him Ned.[21] That made Ned her son, but he was also her brother, or at least her half-brother. It made Pennie the baby's grandmother, but she was also something like his aunt. That sounds strange, but it's true, and it is just another way of saying that the families were all mixed up in those early days.

Ned grew up with the white boys on the old Burch place. That crowd across the river was a wild lot, and Ned was as wild as any of them. The white boys treated him just like one of them. One day they were making a shivaree,[22] Ned along with the white Burch boys, and the Pinkstons, and the Brocks. They were rattling chains, and shooting guns, and blowing horns around the lot. One of the cousins to the man who had just been married came out of the house and told them to go away. The boys sassed him back. Ned was a big fellow, and this cousin picked him out and said, "By God, you big yellow nigger, I want you to get off this lot!" Ned was quick-tempered, and he was more than half-drunk. He called the man a son-of-a-bitch, and the man picked up a axe that was leaning against the wall and started out to hit him with it. Ned pulled out a pocket gun and shot him dead.

When the news of that got around, they formed a posse to get Ned, and they fetched some dogs from Kentwood to chase him. The white Burch boys sent word that if anybody came on their land looking for Ned they would blow their damned heads off. The posse looked everywhere except on the Burch plantation. They set a guard on all of the roads and byways, and they were just waiting for the sheriff to come so he could go on the Burch land and bring Ned out to them.

Night came before the sheriff, and the Burch boys took Ned and carried him through the swamps to Mississippi. He looked like a white

man anyway, and they gave him money to help him get away. Get away he did, and he's never been heard of since he left. Some say that he was seen in Oklahoma once, and someone else said that he had been seen in Texas. But Ned never wrote back, and right now old Aunt Julie won't talk to a stranger about her son and half-brother Ned, for fear that the stranger is a detective trying to find out where her boy is who left those parts fifty years ago.

Ned was married himself when he went away, although he was just a young man, hardly more than a lad of a boy. He had married Jennie Brumfield. Ned hadn't been gone more than two years before Jennie took up with a man named Allen. They had a house full of children after that.

Franklinton isn't much of a town now, and it never was any bigger or smaller than it is today. Before Bogalusa was built, though, Franklinton was more important than it is now. Before and after the Surrender the Burrises had the biggest store in town. There were two Burrises, Bill and Jim, who were young men who went off to the war and came back full of devilment and mischief. They hated Yankees and were death on the colored people who tried to register and vote. It was said that they, together with a Babington, led the white caps in those parts.[23]

After the Surrender another young man came to town to practice medicine. His name was Dr. Amacker, and he had fought in the war against the Yankees, and he had been wounded. Dr. Amacker was particularly friendly with the two Burris brothers, and they shared and shared alike in almost everything they had.

That went for the colored girls, too. There were some pretty half-white colored girls around Franklinton after the surrender, and they had all been raised gentle by their white fathers. There were some young black girls too who had been raised by the white folks, and now that slavery was over they had nothing to do in Franklinton. Bill Burris had two children by a half-white girl named Margaret Graves. They were called John and Wes Burris.[24]

Margaret Graves was the daughter of a colored woman by old man Nat Graves. Old man Nat was a wealthy plantation owner around

where Clifton used to be—before they built the railroad and moved the town five miles to the west so it would be on the railroad. Nat Graves' colored children were Margaret, Samantha, and Ephraim.[25]

After he had the colored children, he had five white children by his proper wife. They were named Tommie, Willie, Mortelia, Eliza, and Harriet. All of the white children grew up with the colored children, and you could hardly tell the difference between them. Perhaps that is why Nat's son Tommie took to Hannah as he did.

Bill Burris also had two children by Puss Crane, another half-white girl. Puss was almost a common woman, even for those days. One of his children by Puss, a boy, died a young man. The other was a girl, Candace.[26]

After he had lived with Margaret, Bill Burris married a young white girl from New Orleans. He never had much luck with his white children, and it was said that he and his wife could never agree on anything. She was reputed to be well learned in that country. Perhaps his troubles with her are why he took up with Puss Crane. The oldest boy, Byron, is dead now. Edward makes a fair living with the contract to feed the prisoners at the jail. Robert got killed, and a girl died a few years ago.[27]

Bill's brother Jim had one colored baby, George Burris, by Lucy Ellis.[28] Lucy was just a girl when the Surrender came, and it was said that the only trouble that ever rose between Jim Burris and young Dr. Amacker was over Lucy. Jim had set her up in a little place just three miles south of Franklinton, and it was said she was his sweetheart as well as his woman. He would come down there from Franklinton, and he would bring his friends down, and Lucy would cook for them and give them refreshments during the long, hot afternoons in the summer while they'd sit on the gallery and swap stories with one another.

Lucy's first baby was named George Burris. Lucy was puny, and Jim had Dr. Amacker to attend to her. Then Lucy turned up with another baby. Jim thought, of course, that it was his, until one night when there was a number of men sitting around talking in Charley Woods' saloon, drinking and chaffing with each other. They were talking about

their colored women, for most of them had special colored women, and all of them had been with colored women at one time or another.

They do say that Jim was bragging about Lucy, how smart she was, and how she ran a better house than a white woman could, she was so shifty. Now, this Dr. Amacker had come there from foreign parts, and he didn't like to hear Jim Burris bragging about a nigger wench and making comparisons between her and white women. So he up and told, as a big joke, that the baby Lucy was carrying then was started up by him.

They say that Jim Burris tried to kill Dr. Amacker, right then and there. Anyway, Dr. Amacker didn't stay in those parts much longer after that night. He moved away, and the only Amackers around Franklinton right now are the colored Amackers that came out of that baby that Jim Burris thought was his, at first.[29]

But he didn't turn Lucy out of the house he had fixed up for her, and when she died a few years later, he provided for his boy George. By that time Jim had married a white woman, and he had just one boy by her, as he had just one by pretty little Lucy Ellis who was dead. They say that when Jim Burris was dying, he called his white son and his half-white son in to the room where he was lying close to death. He took their hands, and he joined them across the quilt as best he could, and he made his white son swear to regard George Burris as his true and lawful brother until the end of his living days.

That white Burris boy kept that promise, as you shall learn if you follow the story of these half-white children who grew up alongsides of Isom Wilson.

John Magee was full brother to Hezekiah Magee, who helped Isom Wilson to make a start after the Surrender. Before that time John Magee moved away to the plantation on the Bayou Sara that the family owned. But before he moved he had one baby by Keziah, a half-white girl who belonged to his daddy. She died before the War, soon after she had birthed her baby who was named Wade Magee. Wade was a full grown man at the time of the Surrender. The white folks raised him, and he was always smart.

There was only one white Crane who had any mulatto children. That was Samuel Crane, a minister in those parts, who rode the circuit. Long before the surrender he had two children, Irve and Frank, by a part Indian, part white, part colored woman named Maria.[30] It was said that the preacher taught Maria how to read the Bible, and the folks used to joke Irve and Frank about the parts of the Bible that he particularly took pains to teach her. Anyway, she was a shifty woman, and she was uncommon smart. She raised her children strict and they turned out well.

In the younger generation old Tom Trigger Bickham had a baby by Hannah. Hannah was a half-white woman who was almost grown when the surrender came. She had been a slave to old man Nat Graves before the War, as a youngster, and she worked for him afterward. Hannah was a favorite with Nat's white wife, and she grew up along with old man Nat's white and colored children.

Hannah's first baby was by Tom Trigger. Later on, when he was almost an old man, Tom Trigger had another baby by Cindie Bell, one year after he got her to make a crop, and, as the folks said, to make a baby for him, as Cindie could be depended on to do for whoever she worked for. Tom Trigger's child by Hannah was Jack Bickham.[31] He is living in the Hackley community, on a place he homesteaded with the help of old man Tom Trigger Bickham. Cindie's baby by Tom Trigger was named Mary. The old man died before he could help her, but she grew up decent and married well.

Hannah was one black woman who, instead of beginning babies with the white folks and then taking up the colored, began with black folks and ended her life living in a white man's house with her black children helping her half-white children and their daddy cry for her when she died. Besides the baby by Tom Trigger, Hannah had three children by colored men. She lived in a cabin a stone's throw from Mr. Nat's house, and, along with her babies, she helped take care of his house and his children.

Tommie was just about five years old when Hannah was fifteen, and started helping with the house work. By the time Tommie was eighteen,

Hannah already had four babies at twenty-eight. Tommie was raised by her.

Old man Nat died when Tommie was seventeen. His white wife was already dead. Margaret helped out around the house, and Hannah came over and cooked. Within a year after old man Nat was dead and buried, Hannah had her first baby by young Tommie. It was a pretty little blue eyed girl, and Mr. Tommie named her Inez. He named all of his colored children, personally. There was a custom in those days for the old people to send out word, asking advice as to what name they should give the babies. The half-white babies and the outside black babies usually got their family name from their daddies, and that is why an old woman like Cindie Bell would have eight different children with eight different family names, the father of each being different. But Mr. Tommie personally named his own children, and they lived in a house on the same lot, for after Inez was born Mr. Tommie just moved Hannah into the yard in a little Cabin he built specially for her.

Mr. Tommie had got a right good education before old man Nat died. After then he read law, and he was considered one of the most knowing attorneys that ever argued a case in those parts. He had much property from his father, and he increased it by smart trading. He was not one of these small farmers who had to take a turn in the fields with his help; he supervised the work, and he got people to help him supervise the work.

Mr. Tommie would have made a great man in those parts, but he never got far in politics, and that is how the lawyers got ahead. The white people objected to Mr. Tommie keeping that colored woman in his house. More than that, they objected to Mr. Tommie keeping a colored woman who already had children by colored men, and they thought it outrageous that Mr. Tommie should suffer those black children of nigger men just as he suffered his own half-white children.

Well, Hannah died, and left Mr. Tommie with a houseful of children, him still a strong man in middle age, Hannah having been older than he was. After Inez he had by Hannah Mary, Noonie, and Pete. He was particularly fond of Pete, and he would ride him around on

the saddle with him, Pete holding on to the horn of the saddle, and Mr. Tommie speaking to white and black just as proud as could be, him not giving a damn, and acting like it, at what they might think about him and his little nigger boy.

After two or three years Mr. Tommie got lonely for a woman. Times had changed since the old days, and Mr. Tommie didn't want to take up with another colored woman like he had with Hannah. He tried here, and he tried there, to get him a wife; but the young white girls in that community wouldn't have anything to do with him. His reputation was too well known, and none of them would agree to come to his house while all of those black and half-white children were still around. And Mr. Tommie wouldn't agree to get shut of them.

At last Mr. Tommie got him a wife. She was just a little girl, like, and she came from way down in the other end of the Parish, from near Covington or Slidell or one of those places. They do say that she was a free-jack. The free-jacks were a colony of half-white colored people who lived around Slidell and Lacombe, and who wouldn't associate with the colored people, or be classed with them. But the white people wouldn't accept the Free-Jacks as white people, nor let them go to the white schools.

At any rate, they say that Mr. Tommie's white wife that he brought in was either a Free-Jack or had a touch of it in her. Some said that Mr. Tommie got her to show the white girls around there how independent he was. Others said that Mr. Tommie knew that no real white woman would be kind to those children, and he got a woman whose blood would help her be kind to his black and half-white children.

Mr. Tommie's white wife was a kind woman to the children, alright. She had three white children by Mr. Tommie, and they were called Tommie after his daddy, Joseph, and Martha. When Mr. Tommie's white wife came to live with him, Hannah's oldest child, Jack, son to Tom Trigger Bickham, was almost as old as she was. Hannah's oldest girl, Ella, daughter to a half-white man named Irve Crane, was a teenage girl when Mr. Tommie married after Hannah died. Ella worked right well along with Mrs. Graves, and they raised all of Hannah's young children and Mrs. Graves' little white babies together, like they

were sisters. Mr. Tommie's white children never forgot Ella, and they loved her as much as she deserved, her being their sister and serving to them as a mother too. They always recognized her and treated her and her relatives as fine as they could.[32] And Mr. Tommie looked after each of Hannah's children, whether they were his or not. The boys he set up on their own forty's; and gave each of them a mule and other necessaries with which to start farming. If any of his children, or his children's wives or husbands, ever got in trouble, Mr. Tommie would be the first to get them out.

There were other half-white children scattered around in the country places, but these are the ones who stayed in the country and had children, either outside or lawful, and who gave their names to the people you meet there now. Many of the white fathers were very particular who their half-white children married, and they made sure that they would marry black men or women they knew, and had confidence in as shifty people. Because of that there was a lot of marrying into the same families, and the relationships have been getting more and more confused every since. It has come to be a disrespectful thing for a girl to have a white baby, or for a white man in the country to live with a colored woman. It has even become a disrespectful thing to have an outside baby, and most of the half-white children and the black folks that the white people raised have become particular about the way their children carried on. A woman like Cindie Bell could have eight children by eight different men, and yet everyone recognized her as a shifty woman and a good hand. Now, the colored farmers and the white farmers wouldn't stand for a woman like Cindie Bell traipsing around the country having babies, while she worked on the share.

There is still a lot of wickedness around the towns, like Franklinton; maybe more there than ever. But out in the country the barbarian ways of the olden times have just about disappeared. They have real families now, and they respect themselves and demand that a woman be self-respecting. They are even getting to be ashamed of the outside children, and all of the mixed relations that they used to take as a matter of course.

Chapter Three

THE BLACK CHILDREN WHO GREW UP WITH ISOM

Real families among the colored people in Washington Parish didn't start until after the Civil War. Even then it took thirty or forty years for the early habits of promiscuity to disappear, and for the children born in slavery and right afterward to settle down with one woman, in a recognized family where he laid claim to all of the children there. In some cases it took up until a few years ago for that to happen. In some other cases that hasn't happened yet.

Because their mothers were likely to have had so many children by so many different men, the colored people in Washington Parish usually claim kin to each other through their mothers, and not through their daddies. The half-white men and women usually knew who their daddy was supposed to be, and their white fathers recognized them and helped them get ahead in such a way that it was remembered and remarked upon, and so well known throughout the community. But it was rare that a black man could do anything remarkable for his children, and so the name of a black father was not as important to remember, and was not actually so important, as was the name and the remembrance of the mother.

In considering the beginning of families, then, you must remember in the first few years after the Surrender that the women were most important in determining relationships. Now, many of these same women, as they grew older, would have children by half-white or black men who later would establish regular families of their own. It was in this later time that the head of the family became a man.

Isom Wilson and his wife, Mandy Daniels, were unusual in that they made a start on establishing a regular family right after the Surrender. In that way they and their children had the advantage over most of the other colored families in that part of the community. Isom Wilson did have one or two outside children, but Mandy Daniels never lived with any other man than Isom. That was a strange thing at the time they started together; it was not until thirty and forty years later that the same thing could be said of most of the other colored people in the Parish. Perhaps that is why their children had such an advantage over all of the other families, except the half-white ones, among the black people around them.

Minerva's baby by the slave Tom, born after Jake Magee killed Tom for starting it up, was named Thomas Barker. Thomas was a smart man, and a shifty one, through his mother Minerva, and they also said that he got a lot of fire from his stubborn father whom Jake Magee killed. His first child was by Ludie Bell, sister to Cindie, and was named Henry Barker. Henry got killed when still a young man. He was shot by Alex Burton in a crap game. Alex was sent to the penitentiary for it, and he died there. They said of pneumonia, but someone else who was there at the time said that they whipped him so hard he died of poisoning when the skin peeled off his back and the flies laid maggots in the creases where the strap had gulled him.

Thomas Barker had a reputation for being a smart man, but he was also a rascal. He was deacon of Jerusalem Church for forty years, but he was known far and wide to be a rascal as well. He married Nannie Magee. Nannie was daughter to old man Harry Hop and Maria, from Mississippi. It was said that Maria was the daughter of old Wiley Daniels, born to him before he was sold down into Louisiana from Pike County. You remember it was Wiley's daughter, Mandy, who married Isom Wilson; so Mandy was half sister to Nannie Magee, who married Thomas Barker.

Old man Harry Hop and Maria were known as two-headed niggers. They could see visions and dream dreams, and they knew how to hoodoo people. The old man died believing that someone had put a

spell on him. Neither he nor Maria ever learned how to read or write, but they were reputed far and wide to know more about the past and the future than anyone else, black or white, in that section of Mississippi. Nannie, their daughter, was a smart women. All of her children by Thomas Barker were smart, and some people lay it to Minerva, the mother of Thomas Barker, and other people lay it to the fact that Harry Hop and Maria were so smart. Nannie was one of the few people in her time who could read and write; they said that she taught herself when she was a young one, out of a Bible that old man Harry Hop had. At any rate, the children of Thomas Barker and Nannie Magee went farther in schooling than anyone else among the colored people in those parts, and it is not strange when you consider that their grandparents were Minerva and the slave Tom, and Harry Hop and Maria, all still reputed above all of the other colored people back in those times of slavery for shiftiness and wisdom.[33]

When you consider that Minerva's son by Jake Magee, Green, was another smart one, and that his children all were easy to learn and got far ahead; and when you remember that the other prominent family, the Wilsons, partly came out of the same stock through Mandy Daniels, it is a hard thing to decide as to whether these colored people got their sense from their white grandparents, from Minerva, from the old stubborn slave Tom, or from Wiley Daniels through Maria, and Mandy.

Sarah Magee—no kin to the Sarah who was old Eli's Magee's daughter—had a half-white girl named Mary by Jake Magee.[34] After having Mary, Sarah had another baby by Tom Greenback Magee, a black man. This child was named Sam Magee.[35] He married Minnie Wilson, Isom Wilson's first-born child. Sarah's sister Harriet, who had Eldridge by Fleet Magee, also had a baby by Tom Greenback, the same who was father to her sister's baby Sam.

Tom Greenback got his name from the war times, when Greenbacks were circulating around. He was known as a good hand, and when he was sold his master claimed he was worth his weight in gold. Just before the surrender his master sold him, and the price was $25,000 in

greenbacks.[36] It took so many to pay for him that after that they always called him Tom Greenback.

You will recall Pennie Brock, who lived across the river up near the Mississippi state line. She had Aunt Julie, called Julie Brock, by Perry, a white Overseer. She had Ellen by Tom Burch. She had Fleet Dillon by George Dillon, a half-white man; and Jack Thompson by Sam Thompson, a black man. Jack Thompson was her last baby. The next to the last was Bailey Miller, who was born to her by Lewis Miller.

Lewis Miller was a half-white man, the son of old man Jep Miller and a colored woman whose name I do not at present recall. When he had this baby by Pennie Brook he was a very young man, and she was almost an old lady. Lewis Miller homesteaded, with the help of his white daddy, a quarter section of land on the old Columbia road, North of Franklinton. He was a shifty man, and even went for a big preacher in those parts; but he was recognized far and wide as a grand rascal, to his dying day.

You can hardly count up the number of children which were put on Lewis Miller as their father. If he had been living in slavery times, they say that he would have been a famous breeder. He had women all through the parish, and up in Mississippi. He would preach down at a woman, sitting beside her husband and her children in the congregation; and he would wink at her while he preached. Now, no matter how good that woman was, Lewis Miller was known to have a charm for the best of them; and that husband had better look out if he wanted to keep Lewis Miller from riding up to his lot one day while he was off ploughing in the far field, or gone to town on business. Young or old, married or unmarried, he took them all.

He was conscientious about his outside children, and he recognized them. Whenever one of them got married, old Lewis would start them off with something. If it was a boy, he would give him a mule; if it was a girl, he would give the couple a heifer. He increased his substance, and added to his land, and was a good farmer. They said that Lewis Miller must have given away a drove of mules and a herd of cattle to his outside children, during his day.

The baby he started up with Pennie Brock was his first. His second was by Julie, Pennie's daughter. There were three men who had children by Julie after having had babies by her mother, Pennie. Tom Burch had Julie after he had Pennie, and George Dillon had Julie after he had a baby by Pennie. Lewis Miller had a boy baby by Julie about five years after he had Bailey by Pennie.

Then Lewis Miller had a baby by a woman who was known in the community only as Lilly Potlicker. Lilly was almost a half-wit woman, and it was a great shame to Lewis for having this baby by her. The child turned out right intelligent, however, and afterward married well. Lewis' next baby was by Zilphy. The child was named Ash, and is a fine carpenter and machinist in Franklinton now, although he is well advanced in age.

It would tax my mind to tell you all of the outside children Lewis Miller had. After he got married to Tempie Magee, it is said that he had at least four other outside children. One was by Sookie, and was named Matt. Matt is living in Bogalusa now; she married a half-white man from Mississippi named Blackwell. Blackwell was brother to a woman by whom Lewis Miller had three children. Two of them were girls, and one a boy, named Ott. One of the girls is dead, and the other lives in Bogalusa now. The boy married one of Deacon Fortinberry's children, and lives with her in Bogalusa now.

Lewis Miller's regular wife was Tempie Magee. Tempie was a half white woman, who had one whole sister named Margaret. She also had two black half-sisters, Sarah and Harriet. Sarah was wife to Tom Greenback, and had a baby by Jake Magee; Harriet is the one who had a baby by Fleet Magee, Jake's brother, regular.

One of Lewis Miller's daughters, Mary, married Simon Wilson, son of Isom. Mary was extra intelligent, and she was a school teacher and a nurse for many years. She was also very accomplished when it came to sewing, and embroidery work. Even now she occasionally sells her quilts to the rich white people in Bogalusa. The people keep her so busy now, mid-wifing, that it is hard to find her at home.

Simon accumulated several thousand dollars. He is reputed to be a shifty man and a stingy man. Many of his accumulations come from

the thrift of his wife Mary, the daughter of old Lewis. To show you how families grew up in that country, take the case of Simon and Mary. Simon came from a good family that was already well set up, both Isom and Mandy being people of good reputation, and respectable. Mary came from a family where they were respectable, alright, but old Lewis Miller had all of these outside children, and was himself a half-white man all mixed up.

Simon and Mary have ten living children. None of them are disreputable, and all of them have their own little places and are doing well. You might say that there are ten decent families who came out of one child of Lewis Miller, and one child of Isom Wilson. It goes to show how things have changed since the time when customs were very barbarous in that country.

All of Lewis Miller's regular children married well, and did well afterward. Margaret married Walter Crane; Marcus had three wives, but it was no fault of his, the first two dying in his hands. His third wife was Alice Magee, Cindie Bell's child by Fleet Magee.

Sarah Miller married Green Magee. Green, you will remember, was son to Jake Magee by Minerva. Green had three children by Ardell, a half-white woman from above the State Line, before he had Sarah. By Sarah he had eight children, and all of them turned out exceptionally well. Green had one outside child by Ella Graves, who was the daughter by Irve Crane of the Hannah who lived with Mr. Tommie Graves.

Janie Miller married a Jack Thompson, who was the son of Aunt Julie Brock's mother, Pennie, by Sam Thompson. It is interesting here to recall that Jerome Wilson, Isom's grandson, was lynched by a mob that included a colored Thompson, who was the son to Jack.

Lewis Miller was one of the few colored men among the old timers to establish a regular family, in addition to all of his carryings-on with other women beside the one he hit on at last as his lawful wife. Eli Graves was another. Eli was slave to old man Nat Graves. After the Surrender old man Nat set Eli up on a forty acre tract, and he married Margaret. Margaret had already had two children by Bill Burris, the white man of whom I've told you.

Eli's children by Margaret who lived to be grown were Jesse, George, Andrew, Ophelia, and Zadie. Jesse was an idiot kind of fellow, but he always had sense enough to protect his own business. It was a marvel to all of the people how he could manage, and he acted so idiot, like. His head jerked all the time, and he couldn't walk straight. But he could plough, and he could chop cotton, and when he chopped cotton or hoed corn he'd never so much as chop a sprout.

George Graves killed a colored man, and ran away to Mississippi. He was never heard of since. The other children were not much, but at the same time they weren't disreputable. The family has lost the old forty acres that Eli had, and Andrew lives on land that his wife fell heir to through her daddy. Ophelia and Zadie married owners, and live on their farms now.

After the Surrender Eli Magee also settled down. He married Minerva, and the couple lived together into old age. At the time of their marriage, Minerva was already the mother of Green Magee (her child by the slaveholder Jake Magee) and Thomas Barker, her son by slave Tom. Eli already had one son, Abe, by another woman, as well as three daughters, Julia, Sarah, and Kissie. After the three girls left home, Eli and Minerva raised a son of their own, Wiley. They also brought up three grandchildren, George, Will and Lee, who were the mulatto children of Eli's daughter Sarah and the former slaveholder Fleet Magee.[37]

By 1880 Eli Magee's eldest daughter, Julia, had married a man called Wade Magee and given birth to a son and a daughter. Wade Magee was a shifty old half-white man. His father was slaveholder John Magee and his mother a slave called Keziah. After the Surrender he became involved in the Republican Party, and he stayed in politics long after the end of Reconstruction, for Negroes in Washington Parish voted and served on juries until the turn of the century. Wade Magee used to own the post offices in the Parish. He was on the Republican Committee. When the white folks wanted a post office, they had to come to him to get them. Sometimes they got awful mad about it. John Wilson remembers one time hearing a white man say, "We're getting

in an awful fix when we have to see a nigger about a post office." The other white man, who had got the post office, answered him, "Well, he's got 'em, and he's got 'em fair." Old man Wade Magee handled the post offices until he died.

Like most other black folks in Washington Parish, Wade Magee tried his hand at farming and became a pretty good one too. In 1902 he took a notion to go to Arkansas, thinking the land there was more fertile and that times would be better. But he only moved as far as McComb, Mississippi, just north of the state line. He stayed there until he spent everything he had and then began to rent land up there. He was well thought of in that section. After a while he came back on down to Tylertown, and lived there about three years. Then he moved out in the country and farmed again. After a while he moved to Bogalusa, with a view to working for the paper company, but his health failed him. His wife Julia, and daughters Bessie, Inez and Kezie, moved to Chicago. But Wade spent his twilight years in Louisiana, living on the farm of John Wilson, who had married his daughter Tempie. Another of Wade's daughters, Ophelia, lived in Franklinton, where her husband, Rev. A. J. Scarborough, taught school and was pastor of a Holiness Church.

Old Wade Magee was a restless, ambitious man. And like many of the family heads at that time, he was a strong disciplinarian. While he was living in Bogalusa, one of his sons left home with a gun that belonged to someone else. When the theft was discovered, Wade Magee followed his son to Franklinton, gave him a good whopping, and took the gun back. That was Wade Magee all over. Even when he was an old man in his seventies, living with the Wilson family, he still worked. For a while he had a cobbler's shop in Franklinton, right opposite the Post Office on Main Street. Nobody knew how he made any money, but rumor had it that his white relatives helped out with the rent.[38]

Wade and Julia Magee raised fourteen children. Most of them drifted off to other places. One lives in Franklinton, one in Florida, one is in Biloxi, four are in Chicago, and the last time one was heard from, he was in Kansas City. There has been a lot of trouble in that family. But all the children were talented, one way or another. All of them were

good cooks, and all of the girls were good seamstresses. John Wilson's wife Tempie has a talent for sewing from that side of the family. Time was when she sewed for all of the white people around where they lived.

All Wade Magee's children were light-skinned, and it was well-known that Wade himself was half-white. In marrying Tempie Magee, in fact, John Wilson was marrying the granddaughter of one of the largest slaveholders in Washington Parish, John Magee, whose family had once owned his own parents.

Chapter Four

THE LYNCHING OF JEROME WILSON

Like their father, all of Isom Wilson's children were real shifty folks, and they married into good families and accumulated. Old Man Isom Wilson was mighty particular about the way his children behaved, and the way they married. One time he chased a white drummer for a mile, with his shotgun, for saying something out of the way to one of his daughters. The girl was ploughing along the fence when this drummer drove by. Isom would have shot him, too, if he could have caught up with him. Simon was extra shifty. He had 320 acres now. He homesteaded a quarter section and bought the rest. He had $2200.00 in the bank when the bank failed. He got 80 percent of that back. Then he had $1709.00 in a trunk in his house, and somebody broke in and stole it.

All of Isom's boys bought land, and own it now. All of the Wilson girls married men who had land, or who bought it after they were married. Altogether Isom's children own more than two thousand acres in Washington Parish today. The old man only left that sixty acres he raised all of the children on. None of the Wilsons was ever in any kind of trouble. The white folks and the colored folks all gave them a good reputation in that country.

Isom's favorite boy was John. John was shifty like the rest of them. He bought a place of fifty acres when he was eighteen years old. The next year he married Tempie Magee. He had been going to see Tempie for about four years before he married her. Then one night he asked her to marry him. She was tickled to death, but she said, "You'll have to ask my father and mother." So John went to old man Wade Magee

one night and asked him. It was pitch dark, and John couldn't see the old man's face, and the old man couldn't see his face. That was the only way he could get up the nerve to ask him. But the old man was willing; he just said, "If it's alright with Tempie, it's alright with me. but you'll have to ask her mother, Julie." John never asked her mother—he could never get up enough nerve to ask her. So they just set a date, and then they were married. Isom gave them a little old mule, and Wade Magee gave Tempie a little old heifer. The land John Wilson had bought was just woods; he planted his first crop in pine weeds. He built a house himself, cutting trees and hauling them to the saw mill, where he had them sawed into lumber. Then he hauled the lumber back to his place and built himself a house. That is how he started, with just a little old mule, a heifer and a wife.

John and Tempie worked hard for a long time. Cotton was only four and five cents a pound, and Tempie was puny. John Wilson never let her, or any of his girls work in the fields. But they paid off the notes on their fifty acres, and John was a shifty man. He would make money doing extra things. He would cut stove wood, and for years he made money buying cattle for two white men. It was a marvel to the big white farmers around him how he managed to make as much as he did on his fifty acres. When his boys started growing up, so they could help him make a crop, he would rent other land and make good on it. He took short courses in Agriculture at the local Bethel School, and even at Southern University, the state school for Negroes at Baton Rouge. He followed all of the advanced methods, like the agents told him to do. He was a Deacon of the Bethel Holiness Church, a trustee of the Bethel Rosenwald School, the building of which he supervised, and a trustee of the Washington Parish Training School for Negroes at Franklinton. He had helped form the Bethel Holiness Church, which split off from the Jerusalem Baptist Church. They wanted the ministers to set a better example for the young people, and so they started a church where they could be satisfied. One of the foundations of the church was that young people should not smoke or drink. John Wilson never smoked in all of his life; he hated to see his money going up in smoke.

John Wilson's name was good at the bank and anywhere else. One time, after the war, when the farmers had been buying at war prices, and selling at peace prices, he got way down in the hole. He owed over three thousand dollars at the bank. Cotton went up to 27 cents, and he sold one load of cotton for $2200.00. He got a check for it. With another check, he went into the bank, and he gave those checks to the banker. The banker just stared at it. "Well, John," he said, "I thought I had you hooked that time. It's about the third time I thought I had you, but you've skinned through every time."

John Wilson and Tempie Magee had eleven children. Roy was a talented boy, who could make almost anything he'd see. He made a steam engine once that would blow out of an old syrup can. He died when he was sixteen. Two girls died when they were babies. The children living in the early Summer of 1934 were Luther, Jerome, Moise, Bruce, Felton, Alexzine, Burnell, and Onshell. Luther had spent four years at Southern University, where he learned the trade of blacksmithing. Jerome, Moise and Bruce were grown. They had been through the eighth grade. Jerome was a cook. He had worked in New Orleans for a man, and he had worked in a restaurant in Tylertown. He had come home to help make the crop. He was going to leave for another job the week after the time the trouble happened. Moise and Bruce were boys that didn't want to go anywhere. They were shifty, and they liked to stay at home and work on the farm.

Alexzine and Burnell were going to the Parish Training School at Franklinton. Alexzine was a tenth-grade scholar, and she was talented in home economics. Felton and Onshell were going to school at the Bethel Rosenwald School.

The older boys were thinking about getting married. One of them had said, "Pa, I'd like to get married, but I don't have no place to take my wife. I'm not going to take my wife to some white man's place." So John Wilson, just before Christmas of 1933, had bought another plantation. This new place had 172 acres. He was going to run an eight mule farm. He didn't intend to put tenants on the place; he wanted to put his boys on it, and he was going to direct them and settle them on

the land with their families. The notes were to run ten years. The Government cotton rent would pay about one-fourth of each year's notes, and John Wilson was sure that he wouldn't have any trouble paying for the place.

With all of the boys at home during the Spring of 1934, they put in a good crop. They had taken part of it off by the end of July. While times were slack, they mostly laid around the house, chatting and talking, mending harness, sharpening plough points, and such things that occupy a farmer's time when the crop is partly laid by.

John Wilson had a good house. It was so good that one day, when John Wilson was ploughing in the front garden, a white man going by in a buggy spied him. He stopped and said, "John, is that your house?" John told him, "Yes sir, that's my house. I been living in it now almost ten years." The white man said, "Well, I'll be damned! You got a house as good as a white man's. I didn't know a nigger live in that house." The house had six rooms. A gallery ran down the middle of the house, with rooms on either side. It was sealed against the weather, and it was painted a pretty gray. The house was higher in the back than it was in the front, and in the morning the family would sit out on the back to escape the morning sun. In the afternoon, when the sun came around to the back, they would move up to the front of the house. The dining room table had been moved out, part in the gallery, and part on the back porch, so they could get the cool breezes when they ate. When people came to the house, they just came on around to the back to visit.

On the morning of July 21st John Wilson went off to town about nine o'clock to attend to some business. Franklinton was five miles from the home place. The boys were going to bring the wagon to town later in the day, and they were going to stay overnight while John Wilson brought the wagon back. They didn't have an automobile, and never did. Tenants could buy cars, because they didn't have anything, and if they fell behind on the notes the man would take the car back. But if an owner bought a car, and couldn't meet the notes, the man wouldn't take the car back; he'd take the land. So none of the colored farmers who owned their land bought automobiles.

Not long after John Wilson left the house, the range rider, Joe Magee, rode up. There was a cattle dipping ordinance in the parish, and Joe Magee had come to see about an old mule that hadn't been dipped. All of the children were sitting down on the back porch when this range rider came up, and hitched his horse and started into the stock lot. One of the boys asked him, "Mister, what's your business, what do you want?" The range rider turned around and said, "I can't go in the lot?" One of the boys said, "Tell us your business."[39]

The range rider said again, "You mean I can't go in the lot?"

And then Jerome said, "Hell no, you can't go in there if you can't tell your business."

Then the range rider turned to Jerome and said, "What is your name, boy?" And Jerome said, "You didn't tell me yours—I ain't goin' to tell you mine." Then the range rider left, and he went on up to Clifton. Clifton is just one mile up the road.

John Wilson's brother Sammy was at the house. After the range rider left, he said, "Do you all know who that was?" And one of the boys said, "No, I didn't know who that was. I ain't never seen him before." Then Tempie said, "Well, he sure did act funny. It look like he would have told his business." Then Sammy said, "That was the range rider. I bet he was hunting old Emma, that wasn't dipped yesterday." Then Tempie said, "One of you boys better get on one of those mules, and go overtake your papa, and tell him to come on back here." Sammy said, "Well, the ranger will be back here directly. We'll see what he's got to say."

When the range rider came back, he came back with help. He rang up the sheriff and the deputy came and brought two others. They met up at John Wilson's house. There was Joe Magee, and Deputy Sheriff Delos Wood, and Deputy McCauley McCain, and one other. They got out the car and came around to the back of the house. The folks were still sitting there. Moise was sitting down with his back to a post and so to the men in the yard. He didn't get up.

The ranger began to point them out. "There's one, and there's one, and there's one." Mr. Wood said, "Alright, boys, come and go with

me." They knew Mr. Wood, and Mr. Wood knew them good. Jerome said, "Go with you for what, Mr. Wood? We haven't done anything. We're home. Show us your authority." And Mr. Wood said, "We don't have to have no authority to take you God Damned niggers to jail."

Then Mr. Wood drew his gun and, opening the gate, began to come in. Tempie yelled, "Ooh, Men, don't come in here with all them guns!" Then the shooting started. Moise jumped up from the porch and grabbed Wood's hand as he came up the steps. The other men participated. Moise was shot through the stomach, twice. Moise just laid down where he was. Then Jerome was shot, then Felton. Then Jerome ran into the gallery, and came around into the room where the guns were kept. You could track him by the blood. He picked up a shotgun and fired out the window.[40] Then he came on out to his brother Moise and laid down by him. Deputy Wood was shot, and laying on the ground. He was shot facing the house, but the ball went in the back of his head. None of the boys had pistols, only shotguns.[41]

After Mr. Wood was shot, Joe Magee picked up his pistol and began to shoot Luther. One bullet went through his hand, another gulled him across the back, and the third skipped him across the head.

John Wilson, plodding along on his mule, began to meet numbers of cars coming from Franklinton, but nobody told him anything. He was almost to Franklinton when a white man told him, "John, I heard one of your boys done killed Delos Wood." So he came on back, hippity-hop on his mule as fast as he could come.

He found the yard crowded with people. In the back yard, a white friend told him about the shooting. A crowd of men were standing on the back gallery. While he was talking to this man, the baby boy, Felton, crawled out from under the bed where he had been hiding. He had been shot through the hip. John Wilson went up to the gallery where the boy was squatting, crying. A deputy sheriff from Bogalusa came running up and tried to talk to the boy. The boy wouldn't talk to him, and started crying. John Wilson said to the deputy, "Let me talk to him, and he'll talk." The deputy said, "You hush!" John Wilson replied, "Well, he isn't going to talk to you. If you let me talk to him, he'll talk." The deputy jumped up and said, "I told you to hush, damn

you"—and he struck John Wilson over the left eye with his pistol. You can see the scar now. "You ought to have been dead" said the deputy "forty years ago."

They carried all of the children, with Tempie and John Wilson, to the jail at Franklinton; that is, all but Luther and Alexzine. They got away through the woods. They caught Luther the next day or so. Alexzine was in the woods, and a white neighbor went and got her, and carried her to his house, where they took care of her for several days. Then some colored man told the law where she was, and the officers came and got her.[42]

Moise died in the jail that night. They gave him no medical attention. One old lawyer came in, before he died, and kicked him in the mouth as he lay on the floor. It knocked out several teeth. That lawyer died a few days afterward, of a stroke.[43]

The Wilsons got a lawyer on Friday, July 27th. The trial was called on the morning of July 30th, the following Monday. The case was in the hands of the jury by the afternoon of the next day. Jerome had to be carried into court on a chair. While he was being carried back to the jail to await the verdict of the jury, a mob tried to take him away from the officers. There were some Negro men carrying the chair. They dropped Jerome and fled. The sheriff stopped the mob. He made a little speech. "Boys, you ought to give the jury a chance."

The boys gave the jury a chance, and the next morning they brought in a verdict against Jerome of murder in the first degree.

The lawyer asked for a new trial, but the Judge denied it. The lawyer then took an appeal to the Louisiana Supreme Court. In a short time all of the Wilsons were let out of jail, except Luther and Jerome. All of the colored folks believed that they would get out in time, but they wondered why they kept them in the jail at Franklinton. It is not much of a jail anyway.

Just before Christmas a son of the dead Deputy Sheriff returned from New Jersey.

Somebody started sending Mrs. Delos Wood, the widow of the dead deputy, copies of a Negro newspaper which printed occasional accounts of the killing and the trouble in general. The white people didn't like

that. The Negro newspaper in New Orleans suppressed a lot of news. They were afraid that they might cause Luther and Jerome to be lynched by enraging the white people at Franklinton.

On the eighth of January, 1935, the Supreme Court of Louisiana handed down a decision in the case of the *State* v. *Jerome Wilson.* The Court set aside the conviction of Jerome by the lower court on the ground that he had been denied a "fair and impartial" trial.[44]

On the eleventh day of January, early in the morning before first dawn, eight or nine men unlocked the doors of the jail and came upstairs to the cell where Luther and Jerome were, with two other fellows. Afterwards Luther said that he couldn't recognize any of the men. Jerome began to scream. He knew they had come for him. There was a little stable lock on the door, and it seems that the men didn't have the keys to that door. While they were breaking the lock, someone shot Jerome. Jerome kept on screaming. When the men finally broke down the door, one of them bashed in Jerome's head with a hammer. They took him by the heels and dragged him down the stairs. The other prisoners could hear his head hitting the steps—"thump, thump, thump"—as they dragged him down.

Outside the jail they put Jerome's body in an automobile. They drove out on the road toward John Wilson's home, and near there they threw the body—naked—into a ditch. When Alexzine was starting to catch the school bus next morning she saw a crowd at the cross-roads. Two white men stopped her. "Don't go over there," they told her. "Your brother is lying over there, dead."

That day hundreds of people, white and black, came up to the Wilson house while they laid Jerome out. They stood in little knots around the house, talking. When a certain Negro man drove up and came into the yard, they all stopped talking. They said he was a pimp for the white people. They knew what he wanted. They even said that some Negro pimps, some trifling fellows who worked for some white people in Franklinton, had helped the white folks lynch Jerome Wilson; and they believed this particular fellow was trying to find out

what everyone was saying. It was hard enough when the white folks would take a boy out and kill him like a dog, after the High Law had given him another chance; but when you couldn't trust your own color, it seemed like the end of the world had come.

Sheriff Brock brought a coroner's jury out, and they found that Jerome Wilson had come to his death at the hands of a person or persons unknown. Sheriff Brock told the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, "There wasn't any lynching; there wasn't any mob, either. There was just about six or eight men who were going about their business."

All of the leading white farmers felt very sorry for John Wilson. They all told him not to move, that he was just as safe in Washington Parish as anybody else. They told the colored people that, too.

Yet the colored people were all very afraid. Some other white men had said that they were going to massacre all of the colored people, and they didn't want to see so many Negroes on the streets at Franklinton. If they hadn't said that, the Negroes heard that they had. The Negroes who worked for the white folks were afraid to cross the railroad tracks into the white section to go to work, for they thought if Jerome Wilson could be killed so easily, they might be killed too, and nothing would be done about it. The white people said that the Negro newspapers, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Communists, were agitating among the Negroes.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People did send a telegram to President Roosevelt protesting against the lynching, from their New York office. The Negroes had never heard of the communists before.

Senator Huey Long, when asked about the lynching, said that "It just slipped up on us, but I am sure he (Jerome Wilson) was guilty as hell."

You might think that was the end of the first lynching of 1935. But the Negroes remained afraid. The white folks said that everything was over, but they claimed the Negro newspapers and the NAACP and the Communists were agitating among their help, and making them surly. The white people couldn't see why the Negroes should be afraid just

because there were still a dozen or so men roaming around in the parish who had recently taken a boy from jail and killed him, when those men knew that nothing would be done about it regardless of what the Supreme Court of Louisiana had said about his guilt.

On Saturday night, February 9th, a white man named C. Booty crossed the railroad tracks into the Negro quarter to have a little fun. One or two of his friends were with him. They had guns, and they had been drinking. They went into a Negro barber shop, and chased all of the Negroes there into a restaurant next door. They followed the Negroes next door, where somebody shot C. Booty through the head. They arrested all of the Negroes they could find, and then turned them loose, except Gene Clark. Gene Clark was a first cousin to Jerome Wilson, the son of Ella Wilson and John Clark. They took Gene over to Baton Rouge for safe-keeping. C. Booty was the son of Dyson Booty. Dyson Booty was the night jailer, and he had been on duty the night that Jerome Wilson was taken out of the jail. C. Booty had just got out of the penitentiary, and had not been long back in Franklinton.

John Wilson had to sell his old home place to pay for the expenses of the first trial, and for the appeal. He had moved his family to the new place where he had expected to settle his boys so they could raise a family, like Isom and John had done before them. But now Moise was dead, Jerome was dead, and Luther was still in jail. Tempie was always puny, and she had nearly gone crazy during the trouble. Tempie didn't want to go back to Washington Parish to live; John Wilson did.

If you talk to John Wilson, even now, with two of his boys dead, one in jail, and his old home place gone, you might be surprised to find out how much he still believes in his white friends. Didn't those friends of his know that Jerome was going to be lynched? "Yes, but. . . ." Couldn't they have kept Jerome from being lynched if they had wanted to? "Yes, but. . . ."

He was sure that none of his trouble came about from any of the white people who knew him, or who lived near the Bethel community. This man, and that man, and the other—one after one, as he names them—they are mighty fine men, they are real nice white folks, they

always treat you honest. The white folks who did the lynching, why, they must have been some white folks from another part of the parish, where they don't have any colored people. Then you begin to wonder just why Jerome Wilson was lynched, anyway.

Well, one old Negro man told me that "It was 'cause them boys cussed that white man. That started all of the trouble." You can run it back like this: If John Wilson hadn't picked the morning to go to town when the range rider was coming, he would have been at home when Joe Magee came by. If he had been at home, no one would have had a quarrel with the range rider; Deputy Sheriff Wood would never have come out from Franklinton; there would have been no shooting; there would have been no trial; and there would have been no lynching.

Old Isom Wilson, who got his land through the help of Andrew Magee, would never have cursed that range rider; nor would his son John. But you can figure it out another way. If there had been no Isom Wilson to get land, or John Wilson to start off with "a little old mule, a heifer, and a wife," there would have been no Jerome Wilson who could think that he was at home and could ask a white man what he wanted in his stock lot. There might have been a Jerome Wilson, but he wouldn't have had a stock lot, and his landlord would have attended to the dipping of a mule.

After all, there is one reason that everybody will agree with. Isom Wilson, who got his land through the help of Andrew Magee, was not just a good old man; he was a "good ole nigger." And John Wilson was not just a good farmer; he was the "best nigger farmer" in those parts. And cursing the range rider, taken by itself, is not so terrible; it was terrible, and had terrible consequences, when "them nigger boys cussed that white man." That was the thing that Jerome forgot when he made his big mistake.

The sons and daughters and grandchildren of men like Isom Wilson own more than fifteen thousand acres in the Negro communities neighboring upon the town of Franklinton. I know a white man who knows his Louisiana. He told me, "Well, I guess that will break up that community. I've never seen it fail yet; a lynching always breaks up a Negro owner community."

Isom Wilson was one of Jerome Wilson's grandfathers, and Wade Magee was the other. Isom's children stayed on the land, and they and their children never had much trouble. They all turned out like John Wilson. Wade Magee's children, except Tempie, the mother of Jerome, wandered around a lot. Some are in Chicago, some in New Orleans, and some in other places unknown to their relatives. The city Magees haven't done as well as the Wilsons who stayed on the farm, at least up to the last year. Some of them have separated from their first wives, or husbands, and taken others. One or two have been in the penitentiary; two have been killed in brawls, one place or another. Others are on relief rolls throughout the country. A sociologist might write an essay on it and call it "The Pathology of Urbanization."

John Wilson still has six children. He doesn't know anything about the "Pathology of Urbanization." All he knows is that he is a good farmer and that he wants to farm and raise his family in Washington Parish. But, although he is shifty, he doesn't know how farming will be somewhere else. He wants Alexzine, and Burnell, and Onshell to finish school, and study home economics in college. He wants Bruce and Felton to establish themselves as shifty men. Above all, he wants to get Luther out of jail. When he does that, (if he does), he will probably have to start in farming somewhere else, or go to the city to get a job, where some of his wife's relatives live.

So the story of the first lynching of 1935, begun in 1865 by Isom Wilson and Hezekiah Magee, has a few more chapters coming. You can say one thing for old Isom; he had a shifty lot of children, and they all make good home owning, "nigger farmers."

EPILOGUE

While John Wilson was in New Orleans, visiting his wife in Charity Hospital and talking with Horace Mann Bond at Dillard University, he left Alexzine, the eldest daughter, in charge of the younger children.[1]

The day soon came, however, when a white neighbor, Jim King—the man who had bought the old Wilson farm—told Alexzine that according to rumor a mob was planning to lynch the rest of the Wilson family. It would be best, he told her, if they left Washington Parish at once. A cousin hastened to New Orleans to warn John Wilson not to return.

In the early hours of a March morning, a school bus drew up outside the Wilson farm and Alexzine shepherded her drowsy siblings on board. Clutching mattresses and bundles of clothes, the children were driven west through the dark countryside. Their journey ended in the Negro township of Scotlandville, now part of Baton Rouge, then outside the city boundary. There, Aunt "Babe"—Ophelia Scarborough, Tempie's sister—was living with two of her daughters, Irma Dean and Freddye, who attended Southern University.

Crammed into a three-room "shotgun" house that usually accommodated three people, the six Wilsons doubled up in bed, with John and little Onshell sleeping head-to-toe on a cot in the kitchen. It could only be a temporary refuge, of course, and the Wilsons were soon looking for other shelter. They found a roof a few miles away in Baton Rouge, at the home of a schoolteacher (a distant cousin) and her husband.

The Wilsons had a wretched time. John Wilson sold his remaining property in Washington Parish, but for much less than he had paid for it. With six mouths to feed and with escalating lawyer's bills for Luther's defense, his money soon ran out. Accustomed to the economic security and self-respect that came with ownership of land, John Wilson had to look for a job in the middle of the Great Depression. He was reduced to sweeping floors at a grocery store.

Bond drew the plight of the Wilson family to the attention of Will Alexander, head of the Farm Security Administration. "Doctor Will" was the leading figure in the interracial movement of the interwar era: director of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, trustee of the Rosenwald Fund, and the first president of Dillard University. But all Alexander offered was a modest donation, in the name of the CIC, toward the NAACP's defense of Luther Wilson. Should Wilson's lawyers choose to forgo his fee, Alexander noted, the money saved could be used "in helping Mr. [John] Wilson to get started elsewhere."[2]

In June 1935, after almost a year in jail, Luther Wilson was finally released; five months later, the prosecutors quietly dropped their cases against Luther and his mother. Luther's white lawyer, needless to say, billed the NAACP in full. The Wilson family never received a penny in material assistance from the NAACP, the CIC, the Rosenwald Fund, or any other organization. Once the family had broken up, with Tempie and the children in Chicago, Horace Mann Bond abandoned his attempt to find them another farm.[3]

Bond also set aside the manuscript of "Forty Acres and a Mule" and never returned to it. He had received a discouraging response from Harper and Brothers, who declined to offer him a book contract on the basis of an unfinished manuscript. It seems unlikely, in any case, that a white publishing house in the 1930s would have touched an account of miscegenation so detailed and explicit as that contained in "Forty Acres and a Mule." To this day, miscegenation is an extremely sensitive topic for whites. While elderly blacks in Louisiana still chuckle over a quip they attribute to Huey Long—"You could feed all the pure whites in Louisiana with a nickel's worth of red beans and a dime's worth of rice"—whites are still horrified by suggestions that they might

have black ancestors, however distant, or black cousins, however far removed.[4]

As lynching declined in the late 1930s, Bond had a diminishing incentive to complete his manuscript. Although southern senators successfully defeated antilynching bills in Congress, the threat of federal intervention, and the pressure of public opinion, encouraged state and local authorities to curb lynching. Doing so was a relatively straightforward matter, for most lynchings occurred after law enforcement officials surrendered black prisoners to lynching parties. When governors, judges, prosecutors, and sheriffs decided to put a stop to lynching, lynching stopped. After the death of W. C. Williams near Ruston in 1938, Louisiana saw no more lynchings for eight years. The lynching of John C. Jones near Minden in 1946 was the state's last, according to the standard definition of the term. The lynch mobs that had terrorized blacks from the time of Reconstruction to the Second War passed from the scene. Sooner, perhaps, than he could have anticipated, Bond's manuscript became dated.[5]

All the efforts of Horace Mann Bond to help the Wilsons proved unavailing, and after 1935 he lost touch with the family. Some twenty years later, however, after they had moved to Atlanta, the Bonds became friendly with Mrs. Freddye Henderson, who ran a successful travel agency that pioneered tours to Africa. More years passed before Julia, now widowed, discovered that Mrs. Henderson had grown up in Franklinton and was a first cousin of Jerome Wilson. With Mrs. Henderson's help, it became possible to locate John Wilson's surviving children and trace the history of the Wilson family since 1935.

After a short time in Baton Rouge, the Wilsons began to split up. Over her husband's entreaties, Tempie Wilson left for Chicago, carrying their youngest daughter, Onshell, with her. There they joined Tempie's mother, Julia Magee, and her sisters, Kezie and Inez. Alexzine and the two other children were forced to fend for themselves. Fortunately, their mother had taught the girls to sew, and they earned money by taking in clothes. And every two weeks or so Uncle Sammy, John Wilson's brother, drove up from Washington Parish with provisions donated by friends and relatives. Uncle Sammy also helped to raise money

to send the Wilson children to Chicago. One by one, they left Louisiana and joined their mother, until only Alexzine was left. Eventually Alexzine, too, boarded a Chicago-bound train, arriving on Easter Sunday, 1936. The children never saw their father again.

One can only imagine John Wilson's feelings as he saw his wife and children depart. He had lost his land, and now he lost his family. Staying in Louisiana, he eventually "took up" with another woman, reportedly one much younger than himself. His children learned of the relationship and were pained by it, but they could not condemn their father. What hurt most was losing contact with him. Felton recalls writing to him and waiting in vain for a reply.

John Wilson died in April 1945 at the age of sixty-four. Alexzine returned to Washington Parish to bury him in the same community cemetery where Moise and Jerome were interred. At the graveside Alexzine met the woman who had been John Wilson's partner; she felt grateful that someone had looked after her father in his declining years. Felton, however, only learned of his father's death when he returned from overseas service with the navy, long after the funeral.

Although they never lived together again as a family, the surviving Wilson children looked after their mother and kept in touch with each other. They quickly sank roots in the North and settled down to stable, hardworking lives.

Their initial destination in Chicago was Aunt Kezie's house on Forty-ninth Street and Indiana Avenue. Within three or four years all the girls had married and set up house with their husbands. Aunt Kezie taught Alexzine how to use an electric sewing-machine, and she helped her to find a job with an upholstery firm. Alexzine worked in Chicago for nineteen years; after moving to New York she found a similar job in Manhattan's garment district. The other daughters stayed in Chicago and became wives and mothers. Burnell married a businessman. Onshell married twice; her second husband is a minister.

The three surviving Wilson boys, Luther, Bruce, and Felton, all found work in Chicago. Luther, the oldest child in the family, worked in the stockyards. Bruce, after drifting around the country for a time, got a job in a steel mill. Felton, the youngest son, became a union plasterer,

a skill he practiced throughout Chicago for the next forty years, with a five-year interruption for wartime service in the U.S. Navy.

All the Wilson children, except for Luther, married and had children, although in contrast to the custom in the rural South, they kept their families small. Luther, who had one "outside" child, a daughter, back in Washington Parish, died at the relatively young age of forty. All the other children lived into old age. When Bruce died in 1987 at the age of seventy-five, he left a daughter, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.[6]

Burnell Wilson spent her twilight years in a Chicago nursing-home; she passed away in 1996. Onshell, the youngest sister, does not wish to talk about the painful memories of sixty years ago. Felton, now in frail health but of sound mind, states that he was too young to remember much of what happened. "It was just like a dream."

But Alexzine, the eldest surviving child, remembers everything. Living alone in a simply furnished apartment on the nineteenth floor of a senior citizens' center in Brooklyn, she can still feel the pain, terror, grief, and humiliation that accompanied the events of 1934–35. But she also recalls the kindness of Uncle Sammy and the other relatives who helped her. She has warm memories, too, of her white neighbors, the King family, who helped protect the Wilsons when they were threatened by a lynch mob. She and Burnell made a point of stopping by the King farm when they drove through Washington Parish in 1950. Although Alexzine professes a grim satisfaction in believing that the men who lynched her brother all met untimely deaths, she does not nurture bitterness or hatred.

Tempie Wilson, a diminutive, light-skinned woman whose physiognomy attested to African, Indian, and European blood, died in a Chicago nursing-home in 1975 at age ninety-three. She left five children, ten grandchildren, sixteen great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren. Frail, and nervous, she had always needed looking after, and had lived, at various times, with her son Luther, her sister Ophelia, her niece Johnnie, and her other son Felton. Despite her longevity, she never fully recovered from the nervous breakdown she suffered forty years earlier after the lynching of her son Jerome.

The Wilsons in Chicago lost touch with nearly all of their friends and relatives in Washington Parish. But Franklinton has altered little in sixty years, and the area is still full of people, blacks and whites, called Bickham, Crane, Graves, and Magee. Delos Wood is buried in the Magee family cemetery, not far from the graves of the two Hezekiah Magees. His wife and children, including Joe Wood, who died soon after the lynching, are now buried beside him.[7]

In the Wilson family cemetery the paint on the wooden crosses has faded; few of the graves can be identified. But in the Bethel community that straddles the Old Columbia Road, black families bearing the Wilson name—descendants of Isom Wilson and Mandy Daniels—still farm, worship at the same churches, and send their children to Franklinton High School (now integrated). The Wilsons and Magees of Washington Parish have now been on the same land for six generations and more. With relatives across the South and the North, they defy easy generalizations about the "black family." Their story is a complex record of achievement, tragedy, and endurance.

NOTES

Introduction

1. Horace Mann Bond to I. J. K. Welles, May 15, 1936, part 1, reel 5, and "Memorandum for the Rosenwald Fund Explorers to be Used as an Incomplete Guide for the Research Part of Their Activities," 1934, part 2, reel 29, both in Horace Mann Bond Papers, microfilm, Duke University (original at University of Massachussetts, Amherst); "News Letter to Rural School Explorers," November 1934, in Julia W. Bond Papers, private collection. For Bond's biography, see Wayne J. Urban, *Black Scholar: Horace Mann Bond, 1904–1972* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992).

2. Julia W. Bond, interviewed by Adam Fairclough, April 9, 1995, Atlanta, Georgia.

3. Bond to I. J. K. Welles, May 15, 1956, Bond Papers.

4. It is likely that Bond, at the suggestion of Robert Park, kept the diary with a view to eventual publication in some form; Park to Bond, October 19, 1934, part 2, reel 29, Bond Papers.

5. Horace Mann Bond, "A New Kind of Social History," speech at Bogalusa, February 15, 1935, part 4, reel 10, and Bond to J. J. Coss, February 15, 1937, part 1, reel 5, Bond Papers. It is worth noting that Robert Park, Bond's mentor at the University of Chicago, was not only an admirer of Washington but had also acted as his principal ghostwriter between 1905 and 1912. Park travelled with Washington extensively, accompanying him to Europe in 1910. "I think I probably learned more about human nature and society, in the South under Washington, than I had previously learned in all my previous studies." See Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901–1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 290–91.

6. James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 153–76. "The fact that these schools were called 'Rosenwald Schools' and the belief that they were paid for mainly by the Julius Rosenwald Fund, kept down [white] criticism of the school officials. In actual practice the Fund never gave even half the cost of a building and generally contributed an average of about one-sixth the total cost of the building, grounds and equipment"; S. L. Smith, *Builders of Goodwill: The Story of the State Agents of Negro Education in the South, 1910 to 1950* (Nashville: Tennessee Book Company, 1950), 119–20. Bond was ideally qualified to study the results of the Rosenwald school-building program. In 1929–31 he had received Rosenwald funding to conduct a survey of black schools in Alabama, Louisiana, and North Carolina, research that provided useful material for his first book. A Rosenwald fellowship then enabled him to work on a doctoral dissertation, a study of black education in Alabama, at the University of Chicago. When the Rosenwald Fund financed the birth of Dillard University, a merger of two ailing black colleges in New Orleans, Bond was offered, and accepted, the position of academic dean. Before taking up his new job, however, he agreed to participate in the "School Exploration Group"; Julia was also employed on the project.

7. Horace and Julia Bond, "A Description of Washington Parish," n.d., part 2, reel 29, Bond Papers.

8. Gilbert C. Fite, *Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture, 1865–1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 208.

9. New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, July 31, August 3, 7, 1934.

10. Somewhat disingenuously, Bond later told the superintendent of schools that "I did not discuss the trouble either with Negroes or with white people, but tried to keep entirely out of it." Bond to D. H. Stringfield, January 19, 1935, part 2, reel 30, Bond Papers.

11. Bond to Robert M. Labaree, March 20, 1935, Julia W. Bond Papers; Bond to Frederick L. Allen, March 13, 1935, part 2, reel 30, Bond Papers.

12. Bond to Robert E. Park, April 2, 1935, part 1, reel 5, Bond Papers.

13. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932); *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Bond, *A Study of Factors Involved in the Identification and Encouragement of Unusual Academic Talent Among Underprivileged Populations* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, 1967), 43.

14. Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey, *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967); Andrew Billingsley, *Black Families in White America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968); Carol B. Stack, *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Joyce Aschenbrenner, *Lifelines: Black Families in Chicago* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1975); Harriette Pipes McAdoo, ed., *Black Families* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981); Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Pantheon, 1976). See also, however, Ann Patton Malone, *Sweet Chariot: Slave Family and Household Structure in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), which argues that although the slave family household "appears not to have been matriarchal . . . it was not clearly patriarchal either." Malone believes that "overzealousness in revising earlier misconceptions concerning the composition of the slave family and community has led some recent historians or their popularizers to exaggerate the stability of the slave family, to overemphasize the patriarchal features, and to overestimate the incidence of two-parent family households" (257–58). Burton warns about the pitfalls of generalizing about the slave family from inadequate data: the federal census listed slaves "only by age and sex (not by name), under the name of the owner," and while some enumerators listed slaves in family groups, "slaves were often arranged in groups from eldest to youngest" (Burton, *In My Father's House*, 168). For a reasoned defense of Frazier's ideas on the black family, see Anthony M. Platt, *E. Franklin Frazier Reconsidered* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 115–43.

15. Bond to Robert M. Labaree, March 20, 1935, Bond Papers.

16. Two of Horace Mann Bond's grandparents were white men; Urban, *Black Scholar*, 1–2.

17. Horace Mann Bond, "Two Racial Islands in Alabama," *American Journal of Sociology* 36 (January 1931): 552–67. In 1910 Governor James K. Vardaman of Mississippi expressed the typical white view when he opined that "while a few mixed breeds and freaks of the race may possess qualities which justify them to aspire to above that station [of servant and menial], the fact still remains that the race is fit for that and nothing more" (quoted in

Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order*, [New York: Prentice Hall, 1934], 102). In 1938, delivering a marathon filibuster against an antilynching bill, Senator Allen J. Ellender of Louisiana flatly stated that "any 'Negro' of notable ability owes success to white blood"; see speech outlines, box 1280, Ellender Papers, Nicholls State University, Thibodaux, Louisiana.

18. Mark R. Schulz, "Interracial Kinship Ties and the Emergence of a Rural Black Middle-Class: Hancock County, Georgia, 1865–1950," *Georgia in Black and White: Explorations in the Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865–1950* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994), ed. John C. Insoce, 141–72.

19. Arthur F. Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936), 138–39; Elizabeth Rauh Bethel, *Promiseland: A Century of Life in a Negro Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), 96–97.

20. Thomas Dixon, Jr., *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1905), 238–43. On the enormous influence of Dixon, via Griffith, see John Hope Franklin, "*The Birth of a Nation*: Propaganda as History," in *Race and History: Selected Essays, 1938–1988* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 10–23.

21. Horace Mann Bond, "Forty Acres and a Mule," *Opportunity* 13 (May 1935): 140–41, 151.

22. Bond, *Education of the Negro in the American Social Order*, 414; Bond to W. P. Dabney, March 20, 1935, part 2, reel 30, Bond Papers. See also Loren Schweninger, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790–1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 134–84. The Wilsons were "shifty" in the sense of hard-working and resourceful, as the word was used by blacks in Washington Parish.

23. A. P. Tureaud to Georgia M. Johnson, August 3, 1943, box 8, folder 17, A. P. Tureaud Papers, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University.

24. Walter White, *Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929); Arthur F. Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jesse Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979, 1993); Robert L. Zangrando, *The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909–1950* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); James R. McGovern, *Anatomy*

of a Lynching: The Killing of Claude Neal (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865–1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and "Legal Lynchings"* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 138; Terence R. Finnegan, "At the Hands of Parties Unknown: Lynching in Mississippi and South Carolina, 1881–1940," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1993.

25. Brundage, *Lynching in the New South*, 138. A few days before I visited Washington Parish in May 1995 a minister had referred to Jerome Wilson's lynching in his Sunday sermon.

Portrait of Washington Parish

1. The other family names were Bickham and Magee.
2. Pronounced "mo-ease."
3. Farmers had been suffering a recent outbreak of Texas fever tick.
4. The whites included storeowner Willie Bickham and farmer Jim King.
5. John Wilson's recollection of the "Balltown Riot" was rather different. "More white people were killed than colored," he told Bond, "but they did not make it known. . . . Old Man Creole Lott killed about six. His wife hid his ammunition—that's the reason he did not kill more"; in transcript of Bond's interviews with John Wilson, reels 29–30, Horace Mann Bond Papers. On the Balltown Riot, see also "Causes of the Balltown Riot," Bond Papers; E. Russ Williams, Jr., *History of Washington Parish, Louisiana, 1798–1992* (Monroe, La.: Williams Genealogical and Historical Publications, 1994), 291–92. According to a newspaper account in the [New York?] *Record-Herald*, November [?], 1901, three whites and as many as fifteen blacks were killed (Tuskegee Institute clippings file, microfilm, Perkins Library, Duke University).
6. On the Bogalusa strike of 1919, see James Francis Fouché, "The Bogalusa Quasi-Riot of 1919: A Microcosm of National and Regional Hysteria," M.A. thesis, Louisiana State University at New Orleans, 1972; Bernard A. Cook and James R. Watson, *Louisiana Labor: From Slavery to "Right-To-Work"* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 168–72.
7. As a reading of the Star Creek Diary reveals, the individuals Bond describes here are composite characters drawn from several people; "Jessie Bent" is based on Tommy Graves. The family names are pseudonyms for Magee,

Bickham, Crane, and Graves, surnames that many whites and blacks shared. Curiously, there were few white Wilsons, suggesting that Wilson was one of the few black surnames that was *not* derived from the name of a local slaveholder. Blacks and whites also to a large extent shared the same personal names. Names such as "Fleet Magee," "Monroe Magee," and "Green Magee," for example, can be encountered in every generation among both blacks and whites. There were, however, three distinctive names, of probable African origin, that persisted among local black families: Tempie, Keziah (or Kissie), and Vanda (or Vander). For their derivation and meaning, see Newbell Niles Puckett, *Black Names in America: Origins and Usage* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1975), 83–91, 402–5, 460.

8. Willie Bickham.

Star Creek Diary

1. Monroe Magee (b. 1871), father of Ernest Magee (b. 1895).

2. A. C. Lewis, state superintendent of Negro schools (a white man), 1923–40.

3. Melton Magee (b. 1882), son of George Boone Anders Magee (b. 1851) and Hannah Graves Magee (b. 1850).

4. Ed Magee (b. 1891), son of Ella B. Graves (1874–1932) and Green Magee.

5. Orsell Magee (b. 1902), son of Monroe Magee and Ella B. Graves Magee.

6. Willie Crain (b. 1884).

7. Bond lapses into local dialect when writing in the first person, but not consistently.

8. Chatted; joshed (from jaw?).

9. Alexzine Wilson, the oldest daughter.

10. Home Owners Loan Corporation.

11. Thomas J. Graves (b. 1856), son of Nathaniel Graves and Arcadia Graves. Although Hannah Graves had children by Tommie Graves, it is probable that Ella Graves, who married Monroe Magee ("Uncle Monroe"), was Hannah's daughter by mulatto Irvin Crane. Andrew Graves, husband of "widow Graves" (Hettie, b. 1894), was the son of Eli Graves (b. 1846) and Margaret Graves (b. 1852), and hence the cousin, rather than brother, of Ella Graves Magee.

12. John Burris (b. 1864), son of James M. Burris (white, b. 1826) and his

wife Sarah (b. 1837); George Burris (b. 1862), son of James M. Burris and slave Lucy Ellis (b. 1840).

13. Thomas Barker (b. 1882), son of Thomas Barker (b. 1860) and Nannie Magee Barker (b. 1860).

14. Murdis Magee (b. 1891), son of Green Magee (b. 1855) and Sarah Miller Magee (b. 1870); Albert Magee (b. 1892), son of Eldridge Magee (b. 1866) and Sarah Bickham Magee (b. 1874).

15. Felton Grandison Clark, president of Southern University, 1938–68. Son of Joseph S. Clark, president of Southern University, 1915–38.

16. Fannie C. Williams, principal of Valena C. Jones High School, New Orleans, and recent president of the American Teachers Association.

17. Allison Davis, anthropologist and author of *Deep South* (1941).

18. Julia A. Brock (b. 1854), widow of Andrew Brock (b. 1846).

The Lynching

1. The Bonds had left Star Creek to spend Christmas in Nashville with Julia's family. After attending a three-day conference in Atlanta devoted to the Rosenwald project, Julia returned to Nashville, planning to stay there until the end of January. Horace drove to New Orleans, and eked out his meager savings by boarding with a black physician and his wife while waiting for his first paycheck from Dillard University. The Bonds were to be reunited on February 1 and planned on returning to Star Creek a week later.

2. Ernest Magee to Horace Bond, January 14(?), 1935, Horace Bond to Julia Bond, January 13, 1935, and Julia Bond to Horace Bond, January 15, 1935, all in Julia W. Bond Papers. Horace Bond decided not to visit Franklinton with Park. Instead, accompanied by Alvin Jones of Xavier University, New Orleans' Catholic University for blacks, he drove the eminent sociologist to Mobile on a hectic three-day trip that took the trio to Creole and mixed-race communities along the Gulf Coast. Racial violence later touched Alvin Jones directly. In June 1950, while accompanying a group of prospective black voters to the registrar's office in Opelousas, St. Landry Parish, he was assaulted by sheriff's deputies who were awaiting the group's arrival. Jones was employed at the time by the Louisiana Progressive Voters League, and he was encouraging black registration in a parish where no blacks voted. Badly beaten about the head, Jones sustained injuries that contributed to his early death in 1951.

3. Bond to Ambrose Calliver, January 9, 1935; Bond to Robert Redfield, January 17, 1935, part 1, reel 5; Bond to Mr. Stringfield et al., January 19, 1935; Leo M. Favrot to Will W. Alexander, February 12, 1935; Bond to W. P. Dabney, March 20, 1935, part 2, reel 30, all in Bond Papers. Horace Bond to Julia Bond, January 20, 1935, and J. E. Bateman to Bond, February 2, 1935, both Julia W. Bond Papers.

4. In 1908 the journalist Ray Stannard Baker referred to this doctor when he wrote: "I visited Monroe, La., where two Negro doctors had been forced to leave town because they were taking the practice of white physicians." He added, "In the same town a Negro grocer was burned out, because he was encroaching on the trade of white grocers"; Ray S. Baker, *Following the Color Line* (New York: Harper and Row, 1908, 1964), 250.

5. Jeptha Latimer Brock (1879–1949) was a graduate of Tulane Medical School who, following in the footsteps of his father, Jeptha S. Brock, practiced as a doctor in Washington Parish. He served as sheriff between 1932 and 1940. (E. Russ Williams, Jr., *History of Washington Parish, Louisiana, 1798–1992* [Monroe, La.: Williams Genealogical and Historical Publications, 1994], 406.) According to Alexzine Wilson, Brock attended the births of the Wilson children; he may have delivered Jerome.

6. John Wilson to Walter White, August 27, 1934, NAACP Papers.

7. Mrs. Freddye E. Henderson, interviewed by Adam Fairclough, April 10, 1995, Atlanta; Bond to W. P. Dabney, March 20, 1935, and Edwin Embree to Bond, June 20, 1935, part 2, reel 30, Bond Papers. He mailed similar pleas to W. R. Banks, president of Prairie View College in Texas; Estelle Massey Riddle, president of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses and a Rosenwald "Explorer" in Calhoun, Louisiana; Edwin Embree, president of the Rosenwald Fund; and Will Alexander, head of the Farm Security Administration.

8. Bond to Frederick Lewis Allen, March 13, 1935, series 2, reel 30, Bond Papers.

Forty Acres and a Mule

1. Isom Wilson (mispelled "Isum" and "Isham" in the U.S. Census) was born in 1833. All dates of birth are calculated from the censuses of 1870, 1880, 1900, and 1910. They are, however, approximate at best, especially in the case of former slaves.

2. There were two Hezekiah Magees. Bond was probably referring to Hezekiah Magee (1834–88), who married Harriet Bickham (1842–1908) in 1859. He was one of several sons (all of whom owned slaves in 1860) of Hezekiah Magee (1796–1870) and Dicey Magee (1800–1878).

3. Wiley (Wiley Daniels, b. 1824) was the slave of Robert Daniel (sometimes spelled Daniels). In 1849, upon Daniel's death, he became the property of his widow, Sarah Marrow. In 1861, after Sarah Marrow's own death, her estate was divided and Wiley became the property of Sarah Ann Daniel. See "Inventory of Robert Daniels," March 29, 1849, and "Robert Daniels, et als (Act of Partition)," October 21, 1861, both reprinted in E. Russ Williams, Jr., *History of Washington Parish, Louisiana, 1798–1992* (Monroe, La.: Williams Genealogical and Historical Publications, 1994), 143–46. As Williams notes, because the court house burned down in 1897, and because documents relating to local slaveholders are scarce, these are two of the very few records that list slaves by name.

4. Amanda Daniels (b. 1845) was the daughter of Wiley and Minnie. She was also the property of Robert Daniel and then Sarah Marrow. In 1861 she passed into the ownership of Mary Ann Daniel, the wife of Jacob Magee. According to John Wilson, "She was their housemaid when the soldiers came."

5. On the impact of the Civil War on Washington Parish, see Williams, *History of Washington Parish*, 181–211.

6. According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, in 1870 Isom Wilson cultivated fourteen acres of land, which he owned, and produced two bales of cotton. He owned no mules or other livestock. By 1880 he owned eighteen acres of tilled land, sixty-two acres of woodland and forest, and livestock valued at $75.

7. John Wilson was probably referring to Andrew Magee (b. 1850), the son of Pleasant Magee (b. 1819), who was the elder brother of Hezekiah Magee, Jr. Roscoe (b. 1871), Ferdie (b. 1874), and Jennie (b. 1877) were Pleasant Magee's children by Margaret Magee (b. 1835), his second wife. According to John Wilson, "My father raised Ferdie and Andrew because he was living with them at the time of the death of their parents."

8. Jacob Magee (1818–1901) and Fleet Magee (b. 1835) were sons of John Magee (1792–1877) and Sarah Magee (b. 1792). John Magee was the brother of Hezekiah Magee, Sr. Thus the probable owner of Isom Wilson, the *younger* Hezekiah Magee, was a cousin of Jacob and Fleet.

9. Probably Jeptha Miller.

10. William Addison Burris (1835–1906) and James Madison Burris (1828–1908) owned seventeen slaves between them in 1860. William briefly served as clerk of court after the war. James served as parish judge, parish superintendent of education, and mayor of Franklinton (Williams, *History of Washington Parish*, 361, 364–65).

11. Thomas J. Graves (b. in 1856) was the son of Arcada and Nathaniel Graves. In 1860 Nathaniel Graves owned eight slaves, one of whom, a twenty-one-year-old woman, was described as mulatto.

12. Also spelled Crain.

13. I have been unable to locate Bond's source for this information. John Wilson told him, "I don't know why he is called 'Trigger.'" I have also been unable to positively identify "Tom Trigger" Bickham. The most likely candidate is Thomas Dolphus Bickham (1844–1904), who served in the Confederate army and after the war became a prominent businessman and civic leader in Franklinton. He served as sheriff of Washington Parish, 1878–84. See Williams, *History of Washington Parish*, 294, 399. His father, Thomas C. Bickham (1818–71), served as sheriff before the war.

14. It should be emphasized that this is Horace Mann Bond speaking, not John Wilson.

15. Mary Magee, born in 1854, perhaps was the sister rather than the daughter of Sarah Magee, for the latter was born no earlier than 1841. (Sarah Magee was listed as twenty years old in the 1870 census but thirty-eight years old in the census of 1880.)

16. In 1870 Harriet Magee (22) was living with her son Eldridge (2), described as mulatto, in the household of Albert and Charlotte Carter. She was described as a domestic servant. In 1880 Sarah Magee and Daniel Carter (probably Albert Carter's son) had a nine-month-old baby, George, described as mulatto and listed as a step-son. Her other sons Will (5) and Lee (4), both described as mulatto, were included in the household of their grandparents, Eli and Minerva Magee.

17. In 1880 Sinda (or Lucinda) Bell (25), lived in the household of her brother, Alex Bell. Her three children included Alice, age five (1880 census).

18. The 1880 census lists Julia A. Brock (20), described as mulatto, as the wife of Andrew Brock (45).

19. Ku Klux Klan.

20. In 1880 Fleet Dillon (15) was living in the household of George Dillon

(22), described as mulatto, and Amanda Dillon (21). George was probably the man Bond referred to as the son of George Dillon (40) and Pennie Brock.

21. In the 1900 census Ned Brock (b. 1881) is listed as one of five children of Andrew Brock (b. 1846) and Julia Brock (b. 1854).

22. A variant of charivari, "a mock serenade of discordant noises, made with kettles, tin horns, etc.," often after weddings.

23. Probably Robert Babington (1820–1906). Babington was an Irish immigrant who opened a mercantile store in Franklinton. In December 1864 Babington, in charge of Confederate supplies in Washington Parish, was arrested by a Union raiding party for his Confederate sympathies. After the 1868 election, when questioned by a congressional committee, Babington denied threatening or refusing to supply blacks unless they voted Democrat. See Williams, *History of Washington Parish*, 204–9, 232.

24. In 1880 Wesley Burris (12) and John Burris (9), both described as mulatto, were living with Eli and Margaret Graves (1880 census).

25. According to the U.S. Census (1870 and 1880), Ephraim Magee was the husband, not the brother, of Samantha Graves. It seems likely, however, that Margaret and Samantha, both decribed as mulattoes, were indeed sisters.

26. In 1880 the household of Ervin Crane (25) and Mary Crane (18) included Candacy (9), described as a sister (1880 census). In 1900 a "Candasia" (probably the same person) was the wife of George Burris.

27. The 1880 census describes William Burris (35) as Washington Parish clerk of court. His household included his wife, Flora (32), and three children, James (14), Byron (13) and Edward (6).

28. In 1870 Lucy Ellis (30) headed a household that included five children, among them George (8), described as mulatto, and later known by the name George Burris (1870 census). In 1880 an "L. Ellis," described as a black servant, age twelve, was living in the James M. Burris household.

29. In 1870 Lucy Ellis had a nine-month-old baby, Almo, later known by the name Almo Amacker. The 1880 census included Lucy (36, described as a servant) and Almo (9) in the household of Lewis and Tempie Miller.

30. In the 1870 census Maria Crane (40) headed a household consisting of herself and two sons, Ervin (18) and Frank (14), both described as mulatto.

31. Probably Jack Bickham (b. 1870), who had a large family by Mary; or possibly John W. Bickham (b. 1867), who married Kissie, the sister or half-sister of Wade Magee.

32. Ella B. Graves (1874–1932) was the daughter of Emily Graves/Magee. She later married Monroe Magee, the "Uncle Monroe" of Bond's "Star Creek Diary."

33. In 1900 Thomas and Nannie Barker had ten children, one of whom, Lucius Barker (b. 1879) became the first black doctor in Washington Parish.

34. Probably Jeptha Miller.

35. In 1870 Sarah, wife of Thomas Magee ("Tom Greenback"?), had a nine-year-old son named Sam (1870 census).

36. Presumably Confederate dollars.

37. This paragraph has been added by the editor to replace a section of the original manuscript in which Bond confuses Eli Magee with Eli Graves. The transcript of Bond's interviews with John Wilson, and information obtained from the U.S. Census, both indicate that Julia Magee, Tempie Wilson's mother, was the daughter of Eli Magee, not Eli Graves.

38. The two preceding paragraphs have been added to Bond's narrative. They are based on the transcript of Bond's interviews with John Wilson, Wade Magee's son-in-law, and the editor's interviews with Alexzine Wilson and Freddye Henderson, Wade Magee's grandchildren. According to family tradition, Magee's full name was Wade Hampton Magee.

39. The county agent of the U.S. Department of Agriculture mentioned that a recent outbreak of Texas Fever Tick had been virtually eradicated; D. L. Bornman, "Narrative Summary of Parish Agricultural Agent, Washington Parish, 1935," reel 41, Agricultural Extension Service Records, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

40. Jerome told the coroner's jury: "My brother, Moise, got up and came to where I was and asked what I was wanted for, and grabbed at Mr. Wood. Mr. Wood shoved him back, and Moise grabbed at him again and tussled with him. Mr. Wood pulled his pistol and shot Moise. I ran into the room and was shot in the leg by someone, I don't know who. I reached in the next room and grabbed the . . . shotgun and shot out the door one time. I must have shot Mr. Wood" (*Franklinton Era-Leader*, July 26, 1934).

41. The implication, of course, is that Wood was killed not by Jerome Wilson, but accidentally by one of the whites. Delos C. Wood was also a Magee. He and Jerome Wilson were, probably unknown to each other, distant cousins. Wood was the son of Thomas J. Wood and Louisa Margaret Magee, the daughter of David Magee and Elizabeth Magee. After his parents died, Delos

Wood was raised by his grandmother, Elizabeth, David Magee's widow. David Magee was a son of the elder Hezekiah Magee, hence nephew to John Magee, who was Hezekiah's brother and Wade Magee's father. Thus Delos Wood and Jerome Wilson shared two great-great-grandparents, and were therefore third cousins (Information about Wood from "Delos C. Wood," entry in Minute Record, August 6, 1934, Washington Parish court records, Washington Parish Court House, Franklinton, Louisiana).

42. According to John Wilson the white neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Jim King, sheltered Alexzine at the home of their black tenants, Alfred and Melissa Magee. This accords with Alexzine Wilson's own recollection sixty years later.

43. Prentiss B. Carter, a former district court judge. The *Franklinton Era Leader* of July 26, 1934, reported that "a crowd of 500 or more miltant citizens" gathered outside the court house after the Wilsons were taken to jail. According to Alexzine Wilson, a number of whites, including neighbor Jim King, helped to keep the mob at bay until it calmed down. The crowd eventually dispersed about 2 A.M.

44. *State* v. *Wilson*, 181 La. 62, 158 So. 621 (1935).

Epilogue

1. Unless otherwise noted, the following account is taken from editor's interviews with Julia W. Bond, Freddye S. Henderson, Alexzine Wilson Young, and Felton Wilson.

2. Will W. Alexander to Bond, April 15, 1935, series 1, reel 9, Commission on Interracial Equality Papers, microfilm, Hill Library, Atlanta University.

3. Minute Record, district court, Washington Parish Court House, entries for June 7 and November 4, 1935.

4. Eugene F. Saxton to Bond, May 15, 1935, part 2, reel 30, Bond Papers.

5. One needs to be careful about stating that lynching "ended." Many racial murders—especially the killing of blacks by policemen—were lynchings in all but name. Even when the law took its course, moreover, the quality of justice that blacks received in southern courts was so defective that many executions merited the term "legal lynchings." See the discussion of this point in George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865–1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and "Legal Lynchings"* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 251–305.

6. The surviving siblings cannot recall the exact year of Luther Wilson's death.

7. Joe Wood was electrocuted, while working for a power company, shortly after the lynching. Blacks in Washington Parish believed that he had returned to Louisiana from New Jersey in December 1934 seeking revenge for his father's death.

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